



# A HISTORY OF INDIA

PART II

MUHAMMADAN INDIA

C. S. SRINIVASACHARI, M.A.

AND

M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYANGAR, M.A.

*THIRD EDITION*

*REVISED AND CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED*

SRINIVASA VARADACHARI & CO.

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# A HISTORY OF INDIA

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## PART II—MUHAMMĀDAN IN

### WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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## **PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION**

THE unfortunate death of my collaborator, Professor M. S. Ramaswami Aiyangar, has prevented me from having his help and guidance in this work of revision. The general plan of the book has been retained; but additions have been made in a number of places, and the narrative, particularly in the later chapters dealing with the Mughals, has been amplified. New view-points and sources of information, both contemporary and otherwise, have been utilised; and the cultural phases of development have been elaborated. It is hoped that with the additions and enlargement the book will satisfy the needs of the senior students of our colleges.

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY, }  
30th November 1937 }

C. S. SRINIVASACHARI

## **PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION**

THIS book is the second part of the History of India—the first of which was published in December 1927—and carries the narrative down to the epoch of the great Battle of Panipat in 1761 A.D., when the prospects of a strong and united Maratha Empire in Hindustan were shattered and the way was left practically free for the English to enter. The social and economic life of the people has been sketched wherever possible; and care has been taken to supplement the narrative with information about the systems of administration that prevailed in the various epochs and parts. Due prominence has been given to the history of South India and the Deccan, while the mediaeval Hindu religious revivalist movement which was such a wholesome feature in an otherwise barren national life, has been sketched at some length. Unnecessary detail has been avoided as far as possible, and a sincere attempt has been made to preserve due proportion between the different epochs and regions. Above all, the author

have made a conscientious effort to embody in their treatment the results of the latest researches and investigations, and not to be swayed unduly on one side by the evidence of any one source ; for instance, in the portraiture of Mughal history and polity, they have endeavoured to preserve a mean between the views of indigenous historians and the pictures of the European travellers and observers. There is the usual equipment of a fairly lengthy chronological table, a bibliography—which, it is hoped, has not abnormally swollen—and an exhaustive index, prepared with the help of a good friend, Mr. K. R. Sarma, besides five maps. As far as possible, the more important of the sources used have been indicated in the foot-notes.

The authors are greatly thankful to Prof. Mohammad Habib, B.A. (Oxon.), of the Muslim University of Aligarh, for the Introduction he has so kindly written.

C. S. SRINIVASACHARI

M. S. RAMASWAMI AYYANGAR

### PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

I deem it a great privilege that I had been asked to revise a work written many years ago by my respected teacher, Prof. C. S. Srinivasachariar. I have not presumed to alter in any way the language used by the learned author or the views expressed by him. I have contented myself with taking note of the work done subsequent to the last edition and, in general, bringing the narrative up to date.

1st July 1949.

T. K. VENKATARAMAN

(Professor, Pachappa's College,  
Madras).

## INTRODUCTION

Professors SRINIVASACHARIAR and RAMASWAMI AIYANGAR have ably accomplished a difficult task. While intimately acquainted with every aspect of mediaeval Indian History, they have successfully resisted the temptation of crowding their work with more details than the students, for whom it is intended, can easily master. The course of Indian history during the eight centuries covered by the present volume has been mapped out with precision and accuracy, and every event has been placed in its proper perspective in that simple and lucid style in which history should always be written.

There is also another feature of the work to which I gladly pay my tribute. Differences of opinion on historical questions there always have been and must be, but Professors Srinivasachariar and Ramaswami Aiyangar show a remarkable freedom from all religious and racial prepossessions and from the tendency, unfortunately so common in modern writers on the subject, of visualising the past in terms of the present and of exploiting it for current political controversies. Much mischief has already been done by the criminal recklessness with which many writers—Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians alike—have attempted, and not without success, to inoculate the mind of the rising generation with the virus of communal fanaticism. Three-fourths of the communalistic madness and frenzy, which is the blighting curse of our political life to-day, is due to the mischievous—intentionally mischievous—history taught to our political leaders when they were in their schools and colleges. The present work marks a healthy departure from the noxious text-books of the past. Messrs. Srinivasa Varadachari & Co. deserve congratulations for the excellent printing and get-up of the book.

It is not within the scope of this present introduction to discuss the relation of the two great Indian communities in the middle ages, but I would earnestly appeal to every young Indian, to whom the future of his mother-land is

dear, not to allow his mind to be unduly biassed by his historical vision. Neither the Hindus nor the Mussalmans are angels to-day ; and they have certainly not been angels in the past. But however strongly we may feel that our co-religionists, have, at any particular period, been persecuted or injured, it is not possible for us to redress their wrongs. Wrong-doer and victim have both gone to their account before the Judge who 'maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.' We cannot undertake His work. May be, 'the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, aye, unto the seventh generation'—but at least after the seventh generation, there should be forgetfulness and peace. It is *our* duty to work in the present and for the future with that co-operation and good-will which lead to the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' to 'a purified City and a forgiving Lord.' 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. For with the same measure that ye mete out to others, it shall be measured out to you again.' A young Indian's freedom from communal prejudices to-day is not an indication of his patriotism only—that may be a minor matter—but a symptom of his spiritual well-being and his mental health.

MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, }  
ALIGARH, }  
9th August, 1929 }

MOHAMMAD HABIB

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# A HISTORY OF INDIA

## PART II

### MEDIÆVAL INDIA UNDER MUHAMMADAN RULE (TO THE DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE)

#### CHAPTER I

#### EARLY MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS OF INDIA

##### SECTION I. THE ARAB OCCUPATION OF SIND

The earliest Muhammadan invaders of India were the Arabs. The Arabs sprang into sudden prominence in the Arabia and the first half of the seventh century, when Prophet Harshavardhana was ruling in Hindustan. The Prophet Muhammad rid the religion of the Arabs of all its impurities and introduced among them the worship of the one true God, the Creator of all the Universe. He came to be known as the Prophet of God; and the religion that he preached was called Islam. Before the time of Muhammad, the Arabs were divided into numerous tribes and clans, engaged frequently in wars and feuds. They were sunk in idolatry and in the worship of stars; but a few Jews and Christians who had settled in the land had taught the people that there was one true God to whom all the other gods were subordinate. Muhammad, always of a contemplative turn of mind, felt that he had a mission to preach the religion of the one true God and to restore His pure belief and worship. For ten years after he publicly announced his mission, he was insulted and persecuted by the people of Mecca, who were proud of their temple of *Ka'ba* which contained the Holy Black Stone, said to have fallen from Heaven and which attracted numerous pilgrims from all parts of Arabia. After a period of

persecution, Muhammad fled to the neighbouring town of Madinah for safety. He there resolved to repel force by force, ceased to be the mild preacher that he was and became "a grim warrior, determined to spread his new faith at the point of the sword." (622-23 A.D.) The year of his flight (the Hijra) became the starting point of a new era which was calculated by lunar years and came to be accepted by all Muhammadan nations including the Muslim dynasties that ruled in India.\* The Hijra marks a clear division in the life and mission of the Prophet. Till then he had been a preacher and teacher. "Thenceforth he was the ruler of a state, at first a very small one which grew in ten years to the empire of Arabia."†

From this time, Muhammad, assisted by his two able lieutenants, Abu Bakr and Omar, became a fanatic preacher declaring that he had been commissioned by God as His True Prophet to spread His (the True) Religion. He built the first mosque in Madinah, fixed the five daily prayers (*namaz*) and the ceremonies connected with them and after the public prayer on every Friday, delivered an address or sermon. He prescribed the annual fast during the month of Ramzan during which true Muslims were to fast rigorously by day and also the form of the *azan* (call to prayer). In 624 A.D. he defeated the Meccans in the momentous battle of Badr which he regarded as God's decree for the triumph of the new faith and which gave him new prestige among the Arab tribes.

In a few years Muhammad triumphed over his enemies and assumed regal power and dignity. Before his death in 632 A.D., he had brought all Arabia under his sway. The

\* "The use of one era ..... was a great advantage to the Muslims, as it gave to the entire world under Muhammadan sway a common system for dating events—which affords a striking contrast to the bewildering variety of eras, length of months and length of the year that we find in Hindu inscriptions and books."—J. N. Sarkar: *Mughal Administration* (1st. ed.), p. 132.

† Marmaduke Pickthall: *The Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation* (1930): p. 6.

ninth year of the Hijra is called the year of deputations ; because deputies of tribes from all parts of Arabia came to Madinah to swear obedience to the Prophet and to hear the Quran. The Prophet had become the ruler of Arabia ; but his way of life was very simple as before. Muhammad was a reformer as well as a conqueror. He improved the morals of the people, prohibited retaliation and the waging of blood-feud without the sanction of a trial and created a nation out of a loose collection of tribes. He gave the nation a rallying point in their new religion and supplied them "a bond which was more permanent than a dynasty." He founded a dominion on the basis of a new religion and gave it a capital which was the religious centre of the people. "He found them sunk in a degrading and sanguinary superstition ; he inspired them with the belief in one sole God of truth and love. He saw them disunited and engaged in perpetual war with each other ; he united them by the ties of brotherhood and charity.....The angel of heaven had veritably passed over the land." According to a great western scholar, "Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep, and waged a mortal conflict with heathenism. had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life,—the like faith that suffered sacrifices and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience's sake." Idolatry was banished and an absolute surrender and submission to the divine will was demanded of all followers of the new religion as the first article of their faith. But it should be understood, at the same time, that some elements like polygamy, divorce and slavery were tolerated and freedom of thought and private judgment tended to be discouraged.†

The new power of the Arabs and of Islam gained increasing strength in the time of the immediate successors of the Prophet. Abu Bakr, the trusted lieutenant of Muham-

\* Ameer Ali: *The Spirit of Islam* (1902): pp. 102-3.

† Muir: *The Life of Muhammad*, Chapter XXXVII, pp. 522-23.

mad, was chosen as the *Caliph* (*Khalifa*) or representative of the Prophet after him; and he was succeeded by Omar. By 644 A.D. when Omar died, the whole of Persia as far east as Herat had been conquered by the Arabs; and by 650 A.D. they had extended their power to the foot of the Hindu Kush Mountains. In the west also they had conquered all Syria from the Emperors of Constantinople (the successors of the ancient Roman Emperors) and quickly overran Egypt and all North Africa as far as the Atlantic sea-board.

Within a century after the death of the Prophet, Muslim conquest had swept over east and west alike. It had triumphed over the rotten empires of Byzantium and of Persia; and "the banks of the Jaxartes and the shores of the Atlantic alike resounded with the call of *Allah Akbar*. God is Great."

The northern frontier of the Arab empire was quickly extended to the Oxus beyond the Hindu Kush. Soon afterwards, the region of the Sulaiman and Makran mountains inhabited by the Afghans and the Baluchis was attacked and the Arabs penetrated into the city of Kabul (*cir.* 662 A.D.) then under the rule of a prince, probably Persian in race. From this time forward there were occasional raids into India, in the neighbourhood of Lahore and Multan. But no permanent occupation of the country was attempted till the conquest of Sind by Muhammad bin Kasim. There had been various Arab descents on Sind by the sea, possibly of the nature of piratical expeditions, in the latter half of the seventh century. The conquest of Sind by the Arabs was "the final act of a drama which began as early as the Caliphate of Umar (A.D. 636)," with their naval attack on Thanah near Bombay and on Broach. Sind was then under a Hindu prince, called Dahir by the Mussalmans, whose capital was at Alor near Bakhar and who ruled all the country as far north as Multan,

Muhammad bin Kasim's invasion was carried on from the south of Persia into the country of the delta of the Indus; he took by assault the town of Dewal, a seaport, and then advanced up the river into the interior, capturing on the way several towns like Nerun\* (near Hyderabad of the present day) and Sehwan. He defeated Dahir near Alor and captured the latter place by assault. The Rajput garrison of the city, when they knew that further resistance was impossible, "sacrificed the women and children in flames of their own kindling" and then rushed on the enemy and perished to a man. Multan was occupied by the invaders almost unopposed; and all the dominions of Raja Dahir were now in Arab hands. The Muhammadan writers say that Kasim planned a march to Kanauj, then the most famous city of Hindustan: but he was suddenly put to death by order of the Caliph; and the advance of the Arab conquest ceased with his death. A successor of Kasim in the governorship made raids on Ujjayini and other places: another invasion into Gujarat is mentioned by Arab historians; and Valabhi is said to have been destroyed as the result of a series of Arab raids. The successes of the Arabs were, however, very limited; and the Gurjara Pratiharas of Kanauj resisted successfully the brunt of Arab attacks throughout the ninth century. The Gurjara soon came to be regarded as unfriendly to the Arabs; while their rivals, the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan, who were known to the Arabs as the Balharas, got to be friendly with them and encouraged trade and colonisation by them.

## SECTION II. EFFECT OF THE OCCUPATION

The land continued under the dominion of the Caliphs for about a century. But the Caliphs sent little or no aid to the governors. They were expelled from Cutch in the beginning of the ninth century. The Arab settlers in Sind set up their own dynasties at Multan and at Mansuriya (lower down the river); while there were smaller chiefs in the neighbouring region of Makran. The Arabs carried on a flourishing trade with the ports on the Bombay coast, by

\* The sites of Nerun and other cities are fixed with some authority by M. R. Haig in his *The Indus Delta Country* (1894), p. 42, *et seq.*

the patronage and protection of the Rashtrakutas. Kar-mathian heretics of mixed Arab and native descent flourished in the valley of the Indus and destroyed the states of Multan and Mansuriya about 985 A.D. From this region they were finally expelled by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (1024 A.D.)\*

Arab historians tell us of the Hindu dynasties that ruled in Sind before their occupation; and from them we are able to learn something of the condition of the people under Arab rule. The Arabs displayed an attitude of mingled ferocity and moderation towards the conquered people. The resisting towns were ruthlessly sacked; but the merchants and artisans were not generally molested; and the people when once they agreed to pay tribute, were

The character of their rule given "all their former privileges, including the free exercise of their religion."

The rulers, through natural indolence, pride and ignorance, left the administration largely in the hands of the native officials. Large pieces of land were appropriated by the Arab soldiers; the principal sources of revenue were the land-tax and the poll-tax (the later Jaziya) which fell on all non-Muslims and was exacted "with great rigour and punctuality and frequently with insult." Though toleration was extended, bigotry and cruelty were often displayed in towns. There were also exacted customs and transit duties and various impositions on manufactures and handicrafts. "In the matter of all public and political offences the law made no distinction between Hindus and Muhammadans; but all suits relating to debts, contracts, adultery, inheritance of property and

\* The Rashtrakuts who were friendly to the Arabs, could not have fully foreseen the consequences of their action; and on one occasion they even "allied themselves with the Islamic powers of Sind" against the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj who stood out in the ninth century as the "bulwark of India against Arab invasions." Arab writers like the Merchant Sulaiman (cir. 850 A.D.), and Masudi (d. 956 A.D.) tell us of these matters. (See Elliot and Dowson: *History of India as told by its own Historians*: Vol. I (1867), pp. 4, 21, etc.; and R. C. Majumdar on the Gurjara-Pratiharas in Vol X of the *Journal of the Department of Letters* (Cal. Univ.); see also H. C. Ray's *Dynastic history of Northern India*, Vol. I; Ch. I; and R. C. Majumdar's *The Arab Invasion of India*. Dr. Nainar of the Madras University gives a good account of the Arab writers on India in his *Arab Geographers' knowledge of South India* (1942).

the like, were decided by the Hindus in their *panchayats* or arbitration boards.”\*

The diversity of interest and feelings among the several tribes which achieved the conquest and the clannish feuds which developed among them prevented their acting together against the Hindus for long. Their disunion was “rendered worse by the persecution of the Shias and several other heretical sects” which flourished largely in Makran and in the Indus valley. The Arab colonists lived chiefly in cities and military camps; some of the tribes, now known as the Baluchis, are the descendants of those settlers. Arab rule has left very little impression upon the soil, in language, arts, and in customs and manners. One effect, however, was a large increase in trade. Sind was in regular communication with the rest of the Muhammadan world, especially with Kandahar and Khurasan. It imported horses from Arabia and timber for its boats from Malabar. The coast was studded with numerous ports.

The Arab conquest has been deemed to be “only an episode in the history of India and of Islam, a triumph without results.” The region was infertile and inhospitable; and the country beyond was held by powerful Rajputs whose strength was as yet unbroken. “As a political force or from the point of view of Arab missionary enterprise, the Arab conquest of Sind certainly played an inferior part.” But Arab Sind fostered a brisk trade with the Islamic countries of Western Asia and served to transport elements of Indian culture and thought to the Arab world.

But the effect of Arab contact with India was great upon Muslim culture. The Arabs learnt from the Hindus many ideas in the art of government; and the finances and accounts of the country were almost entirely in the hands of native officials.† Numerous

Ishwari Prasad: *History of Mediaeval India* from 647 A.D. to the Mughal Conquest (1925); pp. 46-7. See Appendix: Sind under the Arabs, p. 460, *et seq.*, in Elliot and Dowson: *History of India*, Vol. I.

† These were styled Brahmans in the case of Sind. See p. 461, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I.



elements of Arabian (Saracenic) culture are traceable to Hindu India. They borrowed the decimal system from the Indians in the ninth century. In fact the foundations of Arabic literature and science were laid between 750 and 850 A.D., largely with the aid of foreigners. The Arabs got the exact sciences from Greece and India; and books on war and weapons, veterinary art, falconry and divination and on medicine were translated from Sanskrit and Persian. It is believed by many scholars that in this age Hindu numerals were first definitely introduced among the Arabs. Arab astronomy seems to have come chiefly from India. The work of Charaka and the stories of the Panchatantra seem to have been also translated into Arabic, and a famous Arab astronomer, Abu Mashar, studied the Hindu system for ten years at Benares. "The Caliphs of Baghdad extended their patronage to Indian scholarship; and during the Khilafat of Mansur (753-774 A.D.), Arab scholars went from India to Baghdad and they carried with them two books, *Brahmia Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta (a famous astronomer) and his *Khandakhadyaka*, which were translated into Arabic. It was from these works that the Arabs learnt the first principles of scientific astronomy. The cause of Hindu learning received much encouragement from the ministerial family of the Barmaks during the Khilafat of Haroun-al-Raschid (716-808 A.D.)... The Muslims soon secularised the learning they had borrowed from India and presented it to the European world in a new garb."\*

In many other matters the Arabs learnt from India; and "the sword of Islam in the first instance, and the Arab imperial instincts in the second, helped the sciences of the East in their trend westwards."†

\* Ishwari Prasad: *History of Mediæval India*, pp. 49-50, and quoting Albiruni's *India* (trans. by Sachau)

† *The Arab Civilisation*, by Joseph Hell (trans. by S. Khuda Baksh): 1926, p. 95; and Datta and Singh: *History of Hindu Mathematics*, Part I, p. 88.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MUHAMMADAN OCCUPATION OF INDIA; THE DYNASTIES OF GHAZNI AND GHORI

#### SECTION I. NEW FORCES OF CONQUEST

In A.D. 660-61, the dynasty of Muawiyah (Omayyads) usurped the throne of the Caliphs by a successful *coup d'état*; while the Shi'ites who were "the legitimists of Islam" claimed the Caliphate for the descendants of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet and the wife of Ali, the fourth Caliph. This was the beginning of that schism of the Islamic world into Shiah and Sunni which has had such fateful consequences. The Caliphs of the Omayyad line treated the conquered Persians with contempt and kept them off from all share in power and administration. The cause of the Shi'ites had been espoused by them; and they were attracted towards the descendants of Ali.

The Abbasids, the descendants of Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet, usurped the Caliphate from the Omayyads about 750 A.D.; and their rule from Baghdad formed a glorious epoch in the history of Islam. Baghdad rivalled in splendour the ancient Babylon and was far richer than any European capital of those days. The best known of this dynasty was Haroun al-Raschid (Haroun the Just, one of the heroes of the *Arabian Nights*) (786-814 A.D.), who was a liberal patron of science and literature and brought Arabic culture to its highest level. After his son, Mamun, who was as brilliant and gifted as his father, the huge Saracen empire fell gradually to pieces. In the tenth century the Caliphs became weak and effeminate: and several governors made themselves independent; while rival Caliphs ruled in Egypt and Spain. A number of "minor dynasties" rose up in Iraq, Persia and

The Abbasid  
Caliphs

Rise of the  
Turkish  
Dynasties

Turkestan. Under the Omayyads the Arab empire remained "a heritage of the Arab aristocracy". Under the early Abbasids, political and cultural superiority was transferred to the Persians who replaced Arab rule by a truly Muslim government recognising the claims of all races to equality. These latter were gradually displaced by the Turks,\* a section of the vast Mongolian race which included Tartars, Turkomans, Mongolians, Chinese and Manchus. The Persian element in the Muslim world still dominated the fields of civil administration, arts and literature for which the Turks never developed much aptitude. But the military power rested almost entirely with the Turkish soldiers and adventurers. Spain, North Africa, Egypt and Syria fell off from the Caliph's rule; and independent principalities grew up on the borders of Persia itself. The Turkish guards and generals of the Caliph rendered only a nominal obedience to him; and he soon found himself in "splendid isolation."

Among the various Turkish dynasties that rose on the eastern and northern fringes of the Abbasid Empire (in Khorasan and in the regions bordering on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea) may be noted

<p><b>The Samanids and the Ghaznavids</b></p>	<p>the house of Saman (Samanids) founded in 911 A.D. and ruling over the regions of Khorasan and Trans-Oxiana; and beyond this kingdom there were Turkish and Tartar tribal</p>
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\*"With the expansion of the Muslim frontier to the north and west of Persia, one Turkish tribe after another was brought within the Islamic pale.....Turkish body guards were appointed to watch over the safety of kings; Turkish slave-girls intrigued in the royal harems; and slowly, but surely, Turkish adventurers shouldered out the Persians from all places of military command. By the middle of the 10th century, the revolution was complete, and the Turks had taken up a position among the Mussalmans broadly similar to that of the Kshatriyas among the Hindus... ..Of the dynasties that ruled in Muslim Asia from the 10th to the 18th centuries, an overwhelming majority had belonged to the Turkish stock.".....*The Hindustan Review* (1924). Vol. XLVIII, pp. 10 and 11 (*Mahmud of Ghazni: A Study* by Prof M. Habib).

## MUHAMMADAN OCCUPATION OF INDIA

chiefs. The Caliphs were gradually converted into mere phantoms by these new dynasties. The House of Ghazna (Ghaznavids) began as an offshoot of the Samanid kingdom in 962 A.D. under Alptigin who was originally the governor of Khorasan. Alptigin rose high in the service of the Samanids, proclaimed himself the independent ruler of Ghazna and died after a prosperous reign of eight years (963 A.D.) He was succeeded, after some confusion, by Amir Sabuktigin, who had been, for several years, the most prominent man in the state (977 A.D.) Alptigin had been a slave before he rose to power; his two immediate successors were also slaves; and Sabuktigin had been also a slave and gained the hand of a daughter of Alptigin in marriage. The principle of the strongest man succeeding the king, which fully developed in the so-called system of the succession of slaves to their masters' dominion and rule

is thus early seen to be in operation.

**Slave succession and its merits** 'Slave-succession was fully in operation in Afghanistan and in India in the century beginning with the invasions of Muhammad Ghorī (cir. 1175 A.D.) The system contributed to the production of a succession of great men. "When a brilliant ruler's son is apt to be a failure, the slaves of a real leader of men have often proved the equals of their master. The reason of course is that the son is a mere speculation. He may or may not inherit his father's talents; even if he does, the very success and power of the father create an atmosphere of luxury that does not encourage effort; and good or bad, the son is an immovable fixture... ..On the other hand, the slave is the 'survival of the fittest'; he is chosen for physical and mental abilities and he can hope to retain his position in his master's favour only by vigilant effort and hard service. Should he be found wanting, his fate is sealed..... "However servile in origin the pedigree (of a slave) carried with it no sense of ignominy. In the East a slave is often held to be better than a son..... The great slaves.....were as proud and honourable as any bastards of mediæval aristocracy; and when they in turn assumed kingly power, they inherited and transmitted to their lineage the high traditions of their former lords.....and an

(equally) conspicuous example is found in India in the slaves of Muhammad Ghorî.”\*

When Sabuktigin was ruling at Ghazna, the whole of the region from Lamaghan and Peshawar to the Chinab was under the rule of Jayapala of the Hindu Shahiya dynasty of Ohind (Udabhandā or Waihand).

Amir Sabuktigin marched towards the Indian frontier soon after his accession to the throne of Ghazna. The population of Afghanistan, made up largely of Scythians, had remained Buddhist till the eighth century; but Islam had gradually penetrated into the Kabul valley; and now Sabuktigin stood face to face with Raja Jayapala of Lahore, overlord of the Northern Punjab, in the region of Lamaghan on the southern side of the Kabul river. As a result of two wars, Sabuktigin annexed His conquests Lamaghan and Peshawar after defeating an army which Jayapala† had organised. Sabuktigin introduced Islam among the people of the annexed territories and recruited his soldiers from among the Khaljis and the Afghans of these regions. Amir Sabuktigin died in Balkh in 997 A.D., after conquering and adding Khorasan to his dominions; and after a prosperous reign of twenty years he was succeeded, after a short domestic struggle, by his famous son, Sultan Mahmud, whose achievements we shall read of in the next section and who established an empire extending from the Caspian Sea to the Punjab and from Turkestan to Gujarat.

Thus the chief forces of Islam at the time of its impact on India were Persian culture, Turkish The chief forces of conquest valour and military strength and the effective system of slave-rule in many

\* Lane-Poole : *Mediaeval India*, pp. 64-5

† Ferishtor says that Jayapala formed a confederacy of Rajput rulers to resist Sabuktigin. But, the contemporary chronicler, Ab Utbi, mentions no such confederacy. See Dr. Ray (*Dynastic History of North India*) Later Muslim historians exaggerate the importance of Sabuktigin's raids. In fact, he never crossed the Indus, and his attentions were mainly concentrated in the affairs of his small state.

respects. The technical, military and other advantages that the invaders had over the Hindus were also an effective instrument in the building up of their power.

## SECTION II. THE DYNASTY OF GHAZNA AND INDIA

After Alptigin, Sabuktigin strengthened the kingdom of Ghazna and, as we have seen, advanced more than once through the Khyber Pass, defeating Jaipal of Lahore. Though he was successful only in exacting temporary submission and occasional tribute, and occupied only the regions of Lamaghan and Peshawar, he pointed out the way to Hindustan for his more famous son, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Thus, until about the end of the tenth century A.D., the Rajput rulers of Northern India were free to do what they pleased, free from the fear of foreign invasion as well as from the restraining control of any paramount authority. They had not been gravely disturbed by the Arab occupation of Sind, nor by the extension of Islam to Kabul in the eighth century. But now they were seriously confronted with a great danger when a powerful sovereign like Sabuktigin or his son Sultan Mahmud, alien to the Hindus in customs and language, race and religion and also pursuing novel methods of warfare, vigorously penetrated into the Punjab.

The condition of India about the time when Peshawar passed into Muslim hands was indeed a sorry one. Even after this decisive defeat, the Hindu princes made no concerted resistance, but lived on in their old mutual jealousies. The distant Palas of Bengal did not feel the seriousness of the state of affairs; and many kingdoms like Kashmir and Kanauj were fast decaying owing to oppressive rule. Besides, the Rajput warriors had to fight against the sturdy mountaineers from the Afghan and Hindu Kush regions who were hardy in body and gigantic in stature and were also fiery and intrepid horsemen. The great wealth of India, and the booty that could be ob-

The situation of India at the time of Sabaktigin's invasions

The Hindus did not unite effectively

The advantages of the invaders

tained by the plunder of her rich temples and idols greatly attracted them, and each succeeding invasion brought in fresher swarms in larger numbers. They were very strong in their quick-moving cavalry; and they gradually trained themselves to meet the shock of the elephants which were invariably employed by the Indian princes. The Hindu military equipment had come to be very antiquated; the duty of fighting was restricted to a particular class; and the great mass of the people were "either unfit for military service or indifferent to the political revolutions which shook Indian society to its base." There was indeed no

The weakness of the Hindus      dearth of fighting talents or military skill among the Rajputs; but they lacked unity and organisation. "Pride and prejudice alike forbade obedience to a common leader, and in critical moments when concentrated action was essential to victory, they pursued their individual plans and thus neutralised the advantages they possessed over their enemies. The Muhammadans came from the cooler climates of the hilly countries and could display greater energy and vigour in actual campaign. They possessed better organisation, discipline and coherence.....invariably followed one leader and fully realised the value of unity of command..... fought for a cause, while the Hindus had nothing better than class or clan interests to uphold. The strength and inspiration which devotion to a cause alone can give, were wanting in their case, and that is why they showed less grit, tenacity, vigour and capacity for heroic self-sacrifice."\*

The military methods of the Rajputs were archaic and outworn. They continued to rely much too largely on their unwieldy elephants—a factor which proved the ruin of Porus at the hands of Alexander—as against the fierce and well-trained cavalry for which the steppes of Persia and Turkestan were noted. The Mussalmans had a never-failing recruiting ground from which numbers of warriors flocked to share in the spoils of India

\* Ishwari Prasad: *History of Mediaeval India*, pp. 178-179: and also Lane-Poole: *Mediaeval India*, p. 63, where stress is laid on the essential union of the Mussalmans as a conquering caste.

and in the desire for spreading the true faith by the sword. To the unrivalled cavalry and the zealous volunteers of their native steppes, the invaders added in course of time "a powerful force of elephantry fit to confront the heavy arm that formed the first line in an Indian battle." Above all, the Hindus always stood on the defensive; and Lane-Poole well remarks that "except behind ramparts the defensive position is the weaker part." The invaders were frequently led by masterful leaders and great generals and they easily possessed and made use of every advantage over the native Hindus.†

The new ruler, known as Amir Mahmud, came to the throne at the age of thirty, and succeeded in the course of a long reign, in building up an extensive, though short-lived, empire stretching from the Punjab to the Caspian Sea and from Samarkand to Gujarat. Later historians came to picture him as a hero after their own hearts—"the Holy Warrior in the Path of the Lord," in whose footsteps all pious Muslim kings should aspire to tread; while others, building on legends, have held him up as an example of personal avarice, gloating over his immense hoards. In reality he was neither the one nor the other. He was not a fanatic warrior, nor a stingy miser. He fought with Hindus and Mussalmans alike for the extension of his empire, and used his great wealth for furthering the strength of his dominion. His personal appearance was devoid of all beauty and attraction; and he was reserved even with his most intimate companions, having no commanding favourite in the affairs of government. He had a tough and hardy frame which could sustain all the hardships of a difficult campaign; but "he was too good a general to endanger his personal safety by a needless heroism." Again, "his unquestioned supremacy over his fellow-men was due to the qualities of the mind—the acuteness with which he unravelled a complicated situation and read the character

† The invaders treated the vanquished with extreme cruelty; some Rajputs had very good cavalry troops.



of those round him, the restless activity of a man determined to be great, combined with the instinctive behaviour of one born to command"\* He was assisted by a band of able lieutenants, like his Wazir, the great Khwajah Hasan Maimandi. He was not a pliant instrument in the hands of the men of religion; and his outlook on life was secular; though he was an orthodox Mussalman, he was "too conscious of his position as the head of the state to allow the priesthood to become the head of the state." Morally and in religious outlook he was "neither better nor worse than most of the princes who either preceded or followed him."

By 999 A.D., he had strengthened his northern frontier, destroyed the last vestiges of the Samanid kingdom,

His first invasions of India	extended his dominion as far as the Oxus and converted a large number of the Tartars of the steppes to Islam.
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He now assumed the title of Sultan, and received a direct recognition from the Caliph to whom he made a solemn promise that he would wage a holy war against the Hindus every year of his life. In 1000 A.D. he crossed the Indian frontier; in the next year he defeated and captured Jayapala near Peshawar. He then advanced to the Hindu capital, Waihand, on the Indus and took it. The defeated monarch left his kingdom and his difficulties to his son, Anandapala, and ended his life

First struggle with Anandpal (1001 A.D.)	on the funeral pyre, according to the custom of the Rajputs. In 1006
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Mahmud crossed the Indus for the first time and captured the fort of Bhera on the west bank of the Jhelum, the Rai of the place flying at night, "prey to perplexity and fear."

Meanwhile, an expedition has been directed against the heretic Karmathian Ruler of Multan and Upper Sind which forced him into orthodoxy; and Muhmud was lucky enough to beat back after great strain a threatening irruption of the Turkish hordes from beyond the Oxus on his northern frontier.

\* Prof. M. Habib on *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni—A study*—in *The Hindustan Review*, Vol. XLVIII. No. 282, p. 13—now published in book-form [Bombay, 1927].

After assuring himself of his northern frontier, Mahmud started on a fresh expedition into the Punjab. From his position at Bhera on the Jhelum, he was within equal striking distance of both Multan in the south and the dominions of Anandapala in the east. Anandapala realising the gravity of the crisis, appealed to his brother-rulers for help and formed a powerful confederacy. "A patriotic breeze swept over the towns and hamlets of Hindustan calling its men to arms!" and rich women sold their jewels, while the poorer sort worked feverishly at the spinning-wheel in order to contribute to the expenses of the expedition which advanced to Peshwar. Contemporary evidence does not make mention of any strong Hindu confederacy; and it is doubtful whether this common danger "galvanised the Indian States of Northern India into common action."\* At Waihand, the Hindus, strong in their numbers, forced a battle on Mahmud who had strengthened his camp with trench works, had everything in their own way at first, and attacked the Muslim cavalry with desperate courage. But Anandapala's elephant got suddenly frightened and fled away from the field, causing a general panic and rout among the Hindu soldiers who broke and fled. Thus "the only national opposition ever offered to Mahmud ended in a storm of mutual recriminations;" and after this Mahmud had no Indian confederacy to fight (1008 A.D.)

After the victory, Mahmud made a dash for the temple of Nagarkot (Kangra) situated on a spur on the upper Beas, and carried off the immense wealth accumulated in its vaults amounting to hundreds of maunds of gold, silver, and jewels. Another demonstration against Anandapala drove the Hindu prince into permanent subjection to the Sultan who was thus assured of a safe route across the Punjab into the heart of Hindustan. Anandapala contrived to re-establish his power in the Salt Range with his capital at Nandana. He died shortly afterwards and

\* H.C. Ray's *Dynastic History of Northern India*—(1931); Vol. 1 pp. 91-2.

was succeeded by his son, Trilochanapala. In 1011-12.

Advance on  
Thaneswar

Mahmud advanced on Thaneswar (the capital of Harsha) and plundered its rich temple of Vishnu before its Raja

could plan any united stand against the invader. The idol of Vishnu was taken to Ghazni and thrown into the hippodrome of the city. In 1013-14, he had to overcome the

The expedition  
of (1013-14 A.D.)

resistance of Anandapala's son, Trilochanapala who reversed his fathers' policy. The 'fearless' Bhima, Trilo-

chana's son, put a stout defence in the Pass of Kashmir, but to no purpose. In 1016, Mahmud was definitely repulsed in his attempt to force his way through the Kashmir Pass the first occasion when he was discomfited in India. According to the Muslim chronicles, Mahmud is said to have effectively broken down the resistance of Trilochanapala and of the Kashmir forces which came to his help; but Trilochanapala retired to the eastern part of the Punjab, in the Siwalik hills, did not rest in peace and continued to foment disturbances\*

In the winter of 1018-19, Mahmud started on his great expedition to the trans—Gangetic plain, forced his way across the Upper Jumna and came to Mathura where he plundered the temples and levelled them to the ground,

The great  
Invasion  
of 1018-19 (A.D.)

burning them with naphtha. From thence he proceeded with a small force of veterans to Kanauj whose king, Rajyapala, fled across the Ganga at the

enemy's approach. Mahmud captured the seven forts of the huge city in a single day and advanced victoriously for

Plunder of  
Muttra and  
Kanauj

some distance more, peeling the rich country to the bones. This expedition made a tremendous impression on the Islamic world; and the Caliph summoned

a special *darbar* at his capital to receive the message of Mahmud's splendid victories.

Meanwhile, Vidhyadhara, the powerful Chandel ruler of Kanlanjar, son of Raja Ganda, had formed a league of

\* M. Nazim's *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*: (1931)—pp. 91, *et seq.*

Hindu princes, punished and destroyed Rajyapala for his cowardice before Sultan Muhmad and raised his son to the throne. Vidhyadhara seems to have even promised help to Trilochanapala, the son of Anandapala, in the recovery of his ancestral kingdom. In the winter of 1019-20, a new

<p><b>The expedition of 1019-20 (A.D.)</b></p>	<p>expedition punished the remnants of resistance in the Punjab, scattered the army of Trilochanapala and plundered Bari, the new capital, which the Pratiharas had built after the destruction of Kanauj; it even proceeded against Vidhyadhara, who advanced to meet the enemy, but retired before the moment of actual struggle. The power of Vidhyadhara remained unbroken and he con-</p>
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tinued to defy the invader. At last the Sultan determined to annex the Punjab and make it an integral part of his own kingdom. He appointed a Mussalman amir as the governor of the Indian province and brought about the destruction of Trilochanapala and his brave son.\* Thereafter it was easy for Mahmud from his base in the Punjab to penetrate to such distant territories as the Gangetic basin and Bundelkhand. In the very next year Mahmud led again an expedition against the Chandel king, and captured the strong fortress

<p><b>Advance to Kalanjar</b></p>	<p>of Kalanjar which was believed to be impregnable. On his way to Kalanjar the Sultan attempted to storm the rockfort of Gwalior, but failed to take it. Its Raja, however, submitted and made presents. This was the easternmost point in India to which he penetrated. Henceforth Hindustan ceased to attract him, for it had been already plundered as much as was possible.</p>
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The rich kingdom of Gujarat was still untouched; and to it the Sultan now turned his attention. He now led an expedition including a large number of horsemen, for the temple of

<p><b>The Somnath expedition (1223-24 A.D.)</b></p>	<p>Somnath on the coast of Kathiawar, dedicated to the linga of Mahadeva and</p>
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\* A great Muslim scholar, Albiruni, who was a contemporary of the Sultan and learned a great deal of Hindu philosophy and

to which a vast concourse of people resorted on the occasions of solar and lunar eclipses. Mahmud threw aside his usual caution, and reaching Multan, boldly crossed the desert of Western Rajaputana, plundering Ajmer and Anhilwara, the capital of the Chalukya rulers of Gujarat, on his way. After a desperate struggle, he captured the ramparts of Somnath, thrusting aside a relieving force that came to the rescue of the garrison. He plundered the temple, taking away all its fabulous wealth; and he broke the enormous stone linga. From Somnath, he advanced against the Chalukya ruler of Gujarat, driving him to the sea and even entertained an idea of settling himself permanently in that region. He could not, however, make his followers agree and was content with nominating a governor to rule over the province. He returned, through Cutch and the Sind desert, to Multan, troubled by a treacherous guide and by the harassing attacks of the Jats. The Somnath expedition is the best remembered of all Mahmud's exploits and is "the finest achievements of his military genius."\* The Somnath expedition is regarded as one of the greatest feats of military adventures in the history of Islam. It converted Sultan Mahmud into almost a mythical hero around whom a lot of fanciful stories had accumulated. "The idol of Somnath itself perished, but it immortalised the name of Sultan Mahmud."

The remaining years of the Sultan's life were devoted to the strengthening of the western portions of his dominions; he led one punitive expedition against the Jats of Multan in 1027; and he died of a wasting disease in 1030 A.D. at the age of sixty-three. He was a typical product of the spirit of Persian Renaissance which dominated the world of Islam in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. His

Mahmud's death  
(1030 A.D.)

mathematics' and was untouched by the passions and prejudices of Mussalman in general, speaks of them as "men of noble sentiment and noble bearing, never slackening in the desire of doing what is good and right"—Albiruni's *India* (trans. by E. Sachau) Popular Edition, Vol. II, p. 13.

\* For the importance of Somnath, see Appendix M, of Nizam's *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*.

age breathed a new spirit in the reviving and popularising of ancient Persian traditions and culture  
 His age and the praising of the legendary heroes of old Persia. This renaissance was encouraged by the numerous Turkish princes and princelings of the age who were attracted more by the glamour of Persian culture than by the stern ideals of early Islam. Mahmud was the most magnificent patron of this new renaissance; he gathered round his refined court, a host of poets with the immortal \*Firdausi, the author of the Shah Nameh, at their head, in whom the Persian language assumed the dignity of a classical tongue. The famous mathematician and philosopher, Albiruni, was a prisoner under the Sultan and exiled to India where he led a wandering life in the course of which he studied the sciences and the languages of the Hindus and was thus enabled to give to posterity his famous work, The Tarikhu'l-Hind† which treats of the literature and science of the Indians at the beginning of the eleventh century. Poetry was most prominent in Ghazni, but biography, romance and history were also well-cultivated. The Sultan's empire is now but a memory of old; but the poetry of the Shah Nameh and the learning of Albiruni live on for ever.

Mahmud's work in India was but a small part of his activity. He was essentially a Central Asiatic prince who was animated by Persian ideals. India  
 The object of his Indian campaigns had no place in his dreams. "His real aim was the establishment of a Turko-Persian Empire, and the Indian expeditions were a means to that end." They furnished him with

\* The story of how the avaricious Sultan, who promised to pay the poet in gold for completing the Shah Nameh and paid him only in silver and how the offended poet wrote a satire upon the king, and left Ghazna for good and how when the repentant king sent a belated compensation to the poet, the latter's corpse was being carried on a bier to the grave, has been subjected to criticism.

† Albiruni showed a great interest in Hindu learning; he properly appreciated the good qualities of the Hindus and pointed out also what he considered to be their defects. He was the first Mussalman to learn Samskrit and Hindu philosophy first-hand, and he boldly condemned the vandalism of Sultan Mahmud "who utterly ruined the prosperity of the country."—See Sachau's Translation (Popular Edition), Preface and p. 22.

the necessary prestige and plunder. They were not essentially the crusades of a fanatic zealot anxious to spread Islam, but merely "secular exploits waged for the greed of glory and gold,"\* His army was not a host of religious warriors, but only trained veterans accustomed to fight Hindus and Mussalmans alike and welded together bonds of strict discipline and comradeship in arms.

The Sultan is deemed by the present day historians not to have been a fanatic. He strictly punished any heresy or disbelief among his Muslim subjects, "He believed in the religious unity of the state and severely punished all dissenters." Mosques were erected in all the conquered territories and Muslim preachers were appointed to instruct the non-believers. Some Hindu Rajas are said to have embraced Islam probably more on account of political expediency than from conviction. The Hindus are said to have enjoyed toleration at Ghazna where they were given separate quarters and permitted free observance of their religious ceremonies. And it was only in war that the Sultan resorted to the destruction and pillage of Hindu temples which were store-houses of accumulated wealth.

Mahmud's empire extended from Iraq and the Caspian Sea to the Ganga and from the Oxus to Sind and the desert of Rajputana. He had conquered the Hindu Shahiya kingdom which stretched up to the Beas, and the provinces of Multan and Bhatinda; while the rulers of the Kashmir hill-states, Kanauj and Gwalior, paid him tribute. Mahmud's extensive empire was not knit together by a strong administrative system. He had no aptitude for civil administration and his officials were oppressive and tyrannical. Peace did not prevail in many of the conquered lands; caravan routes were unsafe; and there was no regular imperial police to put down the robbers.

Impermanence  
of his empire

\*Prof. M. Habib, quoted above, says it is impossible to read a religious motive into his expeditions; he merely sacked the temples in which were gathered the country's riches and extended a limited toleration to the subdued. Zeal for Islam was used by historians as "an a posteriori justification of what had been done" and praised the deed in the bargain.

The condition of the Punjab was very chaotic; and the cruelty and vandalism of Mahmud's soldiery were such that the Hindus came to look upon Islam and its followers with loathing and terror. Albirumi bitterly complained of this aspect of Mahmud's rule; he said: Their (Hindus') scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate hatred of all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hands cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares and other places."\*

Particularly in India

Mahmud was an autocrat of the most absolute kind. He kept a vigilant control over the provincial governors and military commanders and dealt out impartial justice in all cases that came before him. Round him centred all the activities of the state, which was managed by a huge hierarchy of officials. The Wazir was at their head and in charge of the finance department. There was different grades in the army where promotion depended on merit and efficiency. There was a regular official post throughout the empire; and the Sultan learnt of all happenings through special messengers and spies. In each province there was a commander of the army besides the civil governor who was in charge of the revenue collection. Each town was protected by a fort and under the command of a kotwal, Control was also exercised over religious charities and endowments.†

In spite of this elaborate organisation, the empire was unwieldy: and the Sultan it to be so and even planned its division among his sons.

Thus Mahmud's dominion could not be permanent in India from its very nature East of Lahore, every trace of it quickly disappeared. Within fifteen years after the Sultan's death, there was a strong Hindu revival which greatly diminished the Indian province of the Ghaznavids.

Conclusion

\* Sachau: Vol. 1, p. 22.

† See Nazim's Sultan Mahmud, Ch. X.



## SECTION 11

THE FALL OF THE GHAZNAVIDS AND THE  
RISE OF GHOR

Mahmud's empire passed on to his able son, Masud, who had "the physique and personality of a Rustam", though an attempt was made in favour of his brother, Mohammad.

**Sultan Masud**  
(1033.40 A.D.)

He was however, over-confident and not capable of discerning things in their true nature. His dominions were

threatened by the Seljuk Turks in the north-west: and instead of facing them, he devoted his attention to Hindustan where his general advanced as far east as Benares and plundered that holy and rich city. The Punjab was, however, in a state of ferment and disorder; its governor turned traitor and was put down with great difficulty by a Hindu adventurer, Tilak, who became the favourite of the

**His defeat by the  
Seljuks**

Sultan. This is a clear proof that the army of Ghazna should have contained a proportion of Hindu troops. Every-

where the rais and the peasants were restive. Masud made an expedition against Hansi and captured it. But this and the acquisition of some other Hindu forts did not make the empire stable. While things were in such a pass, the Seljuk

**Maudud**  
(1040.49 A.D.)

hordes swept upon the trans-Oxus provinces and Khorasan and inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Sultan at Merv

(1037). In his misfortune Masud was displaced. The throne passed, after a short revolution, to Maudud, his son, who made a vigorous effort to recover a firm hold over the Punjab. Now that the Seljuks had destroyed the Ghazna

**Hindu reaction**  
(1043, A.D.)

empire in the west, Maudud was in no condition to cope with the forces of disorder that became acute. A confederacy

of Hindu chiefs drove away the Ghaznavid officers and recovered Thaneswar and Nagarkot. The temple of Nagarkot was restored and this caused great jubilation among the Hindus. The Muslims were driven west of the Ravi.

Lahore, however, was saved for the Ghaznavids, and the Hindus retired without pressing its siege. "Over the rest of the country Hinduism soon forgot the Mussalmans. Such traces of Islam as Mahmud might have left in India were simply swept off. On the other hand, the Hindus learnt no lessons from their adversity. No national government arose to end the civil wars of Aryavarta; and after a century and a half Shahabu'd-din Ghorî found the Hindu *rais* as dis-united as ever."

The later history of the Ghaznavids is obscure. The rulers were dominated by the growing empire of the Seljuks and weakened by palace intrigues and revolutions. Their hold over Lahore and Multan was retained, since there was no more powerful Hindu reaction. The successors of Sultan Maudud, who died in 1049, were content to live on in apparent subordination to the growing Seljuk empire which came to be quickly Persianised in culture. After the death of Bahram, the last noteworthy king, in 1152 A.D., his successor was forced to retire to his Punjab territory, being hard-pressed by the Turks and by the chiefs of Ghor, a small mountain principality between Herat and Ghazna. Alau'd-din of Ghor, better known as Jahansoz (the Incendiary of the World) marched upon Ghazna in revenge for an injury done to his brother by the Sultan, and ruthlessly plundered it. About the same time, the Seljuk dynasty collapsed; and the Ghaznavid monarch finding his chief support gone, finally took shelter in Lahore. The Seljuk empire flourished for a century and then began to decay after about the middle of the twelfth century. Provincial governors became independent; and a new race of invaders, the Turkomans, poured across the Jaxartes and shattered the empire, devastating the Oxus valley and Khorasan. On the ruins of the kingdom of Ghazna and the empire of the Seljuks rose two new and vigorous states, those of Ghor and Khwarizm. The dynasty of Ghor, as we shall see presently, succeeded to the Indian heritage of the Ghaznavids.

The Ghori chiefs had been long existing as a small but independent power. They were reduced about 1010 A.D.

The Dynasty of  
Ghori

by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna; and they continued under Ghazna supremacy till the time when Alau'd-din Jahansoz gave

up Ghazna to fire and sword. On his death in 1161 A.D., two nephews of his, Ahiyasu'd-din and Shahabu'd-din, succeeded to his power. The elder took Ghazna and Herat

Shahabu'd-din  
(Muhammad)  
Ghori (1161—  
1206 A.D.)

and reigned as the titular sovereign of all the wide possessions of the family, until his death in 1202 A.D. The younger brother, commonly known as Muhammad Ghori, was "the real ruler

and extender of the kingdom."\* He first conquered part of Khôeasan from the Seljuks and then began a series of campaigns in India which really laid the

His first Indian  
expeditions

foundation of Muhammadan rule in our country. He reduced Sind and Multan

(1176-8 A.D.) in the course of two expeditions and even made an unsuccessful attack on Bhima Deva Chalukya of

Conquest of Sind  
and the Punjab  
(1176-86 A.D.)

Gujarat. He had already got possession of Peshawar and the whole of Sind down to the sea coast. Next, he acquired and strengthened the fort of Sialkot; and

lastly he defeated and captured Khushru Malik, the last member of the house of Ghazna, and got possession of Lahore (1186 A.D.). The line of Sabuktigin came to an inglorious end; and the Ghoris thus became the lords of the Punjab.

### SECTION III

#### MUHAMMAD GHORI AND THE CONQUEST OF HINDUSTAN

Muhammad Ghori now possessed the whole line of the Indus down to the sea; he now strengthened his Indian base and fortified his eastern frontier

The chief powers  
of Hindustan

town of Sirhind† between the Sutlej and the Jumna. He had rid himself of all

\* S Lane-Poole: *The Muhammadan Dynasties* (1894), p. 292.

† Also called Tabarhinda by historians and confused by some with Bhatinda which was much further west.

Muslim rivals, had reorganised his forces and could now face the Rajpus of Hindustan. His preparations alarmed the great Prithvi Raja, the Chauhan ruler of Delhi and Ajmere. The most powerful Rajput clans were the Gaharwars, of Kanauj; the Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmere; the Palas and Senas of Bihar and Bengal, who were, however, too distant to feel the seriousness of the impending struggle; the Chandels of Bundelkhand; and the rulers of Gujarat, who were first Chalukyas and, later, of the Baghela clan. The most powerful of these were Jayachandra of Kanauj and Prithvi Raja of Delhi; and their jealousy and mutual hatred prevented them from offering a united resistance to the invader. It is said that Jaya Chandra of Kanauj entertained bands of Turkish mercenaries in his service, through whom some advantages were secured by the invader. He is also charged with the crime of having positively invited Ghori to destroy Prithvi Raja; but probably this is not true.

In the first invasion, Ghori confronted Prithvi Raja at Tarain (also written as Narain) near Thaneswar in 1191 A.D. The Hindu chief was assisted by his brother-Rajputs except his rival of Kanauj. The Rajputs scattered the enemy by a vigorous charge; and Ghori himself was wounded and had to be carried away from the field. The Muslim army broke away in a panic and was pursued for forty miles by the victors. The Rajputs besieged Sirhind and, after a long blockade, got favourable terms from the garrison.

In the next year Ghori returned with even a larger army; he was met on the same plain by Prithvi Raja at the head of a large Rajput confederacy and a numerous body of horse and elephants. The Muhammadans adopted the tactics of sudden assaults with cavalry and equally quick retirements which made the Hindus think that they were fleeing from the field and a final attack by a reserve force.\* After a desperate fight

\* Similar tactics were adopted by Ahmed Shah Abdali later and by Sabuktigin and Sultan Mahmud earlier.

† Tarasri, according to the *Cambridge Indian History*. (Vol. 3).

lasting till nightfall, the Hindus were totally defeated; Samarsi of Chitor, the brother-in law of Prithvi Raja and known for his wisdom and bravery, and Govind Rai, his brother, were both slain. Prithvi Raja himself fled from the field, but was taken and miserably executed. The victory was followed by the quick reduction of Samana, Hansi and other places in the neighbourhood. It was "an irreparable blow to Rajput power.....The demoralisation caused by

Its significance this defeat pervaded all grades of Indian society, and there was now left no one among the Rajputs who could now draw to his banner his fellow-princes to withstand the attacks of the Muslims."\*

Ghuri next captured Ajmere which was the chief capital of the enemy and gave it to the charge of a natural son of Prithvi Raja on condition of his paying tribute. He

Conquest of  
Ajmere, Delhi,  
etc.

returned to Ghazna leaving his favourite slave, Kutbu'd-din Aibek, in charge of the new conquest. The latter quickly captured Mirat, Aligarh and Delhi, the

last of which he made his headquarters. Shortly afterwards he extinguished Hindu rule in Ajmere and annexed it permanently to the Mussalman dominion (1194 A.D.).

Ghuri next turned his attention to the conquest of Kanauj. Jaya Chandra, who had unpatriotically held aloof

Fall of Kanauj  
(1193 A.D.)

from the earlier struggle, was defeated near Chandwar and perished in the Ganga, while attempting to flee. After

plundering Kanauj, Ghori advanced to Benares which was the second capital of the Gaharwars and destroyed its temples. The Muhammadan chronicler tells us that all the country up to Benares was annexed, the Hindu coins being restruck with the name of the conqueror.

Kutbu'd-din was made the viceroy of his master in all his conquests in Hindustan; he was a very capable ruler

Kutbu'd-din's  
rule

and quickly pacified the whole country, so that "the wolf and the sheep drank water out of the same pond."† He

severely punished the refractory chiefs. He annexed

\* Ishwari Prasad: *Mediaeval India*, p. 113.

† *The Tajul-Ma'asir*: p. 225, in Elliot and Dowson: *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 225.

Ajmere permanently and, along with his master, advanced in 1196 against the strong fortress of Gwalior which submitted. He next turned his attention to Gujarat, defeated its ruler, Bhima Deva, and overran the capital, Anhilwara Patan (1197). Gujarat was, though severely shaken, recovered soon afterwards by the Hindus whose dominion did not perish till about a century later. In 1202, Kutbu'd-din, accompanied by his slave, Iltutmish, advanced against the Chandel prince of Bundelkhand who was defeated and forced to surrender the strong fort of Kalanjar to the victor. The neighbouring town of Kalpi on the Jumna fell into Mussalman hands.

Meanwhile a Turko-Afghan adventurer in the service of Muhammad Ghori, by name Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji,\* who had gained fame under Kutbu-d-din, led an expedition into Bihar (1197 A.D.), rooted out easily the Pala dynasty and the degenerate Buddhism that had its stronghold there. He is said to have seized a Buddhist settlement described as a vihara (probably Vikramasila), killed all the shaven-headed as Buddhist monks there and scattered a large number of books from their library. He followed this up with the conquest of Bengal from the aged Rai Lakshmana Sena of Gaur who was surprised at his capital, Nuddea (Navad-wipa), and fled towards Vikrampur, his ancestral capital, where his descendants continued to rule for some time. Muhammad destroyed Nuddea, the home of Sanskrit learning, and made Lakhnauti his capital (*cir.* 1199 A.D.). The story of the hasty and cowardly flight of the Raja before a small party of Muslim horsemen, told by Mussalman historians, is probably exaggerated and untrue.

The Muhamadan conqueror entertained plans of extending his arms to the region of the Himalayas; but his attempt proved futile and he had to return after a great loss.

Muhammad Ghori, like Sultan Mahmud, had ambitions in the west and invaded Khwarizm with a huge force; but

\* The Khiljis were Turks who had settled in Afghanistan.

he sustained a disastrous defeat and barely escaped with his life (1203-4). The victor overran Persia and even penetrated into Afghanistan. The forces of disorder began to work rapidly. Taju'd-din Eldoz, a slave of Ghor who was in charge of Ghazna, shut its gates against his master and assumed independence. The turbulent Khokhars stirred up trouble everywhere in the Punjab. Kutbu'd-din remained steadfast and loyal and helped his master in recovering hold over Multan and Ghazna and in pressing the Khokhars close. In this confusion Ghor was treacherously assassinated during his journey from Lahore to Afghanistan by a party of Khokhars (1206 A.D.). His dynasty did not long survive him. The Turkish slaves who had served as generals under him assumed independence. Kutbu'd-din became the first of the Slave Kings of Delhi; Nasiru'd-din Kubaicha ruled in Sind; and Eldoz assumed power in Ghazna. The rule of the dynasty of Ghor was confined to Western Afghanistan; and even from here it was expelled by the armies of the ruler of Khwarizm (1215 A.D.).

Minhaju's-Siraj, a contemporary historian, who rose to high honours under the Slave Kings, praises Muhammad Ghor for his munificence and patronage of learned men. He was less fanatical than Sultan Mahmud. From the beginning of his Indian career, he aimed at the building up of a permanent dominion and tried to consolidate his conquests under regular rule. He brought the fairest part of Hindustan under Muslim sway and was the real creator of the Muhammadan Empire of India. Though his ambition was directed largely towards the west, his work in India turned out to be solid and bore good fruit in the hands of Kutbu'd-din and his successors. Kutbu'd-din was charged by his master with the duty of extending the dominion of Islam in India and succeeded in founding a dynasty of rules in Delhi. Ghor had planned a permanent settlement and his scheme bore good fruit in the hands of his general and successor, Kutbu'd-din.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SLAVE DYNASTY—THE RISE OF THE INDO-MUHAMMADAN EMPIRE (1206—1290)

#### 1. KUTBU'D-DIN AND ILTUTMISH (1206—1236)

After the death of Muhammad Ghori, Kutbu'ddin Aibek,\* his viceroy at Delhi, was enabled to found an independent kingdom and got from Ghori's successor a formal confirmation of his independence. He asserted, and was strong enough to enforce, his suzerainty over his brother slave-generals ;

Kutbu'd-din,  
Founder of the  
Indo-Muhamma-  
dan empire

and he strengthened himself by matrimonial alliances with them. Thus he married the daughter of Tajud-din Eldoz who assumed rule in Ghazna, gave his sister in marriage to Nasir'ud-din, Kubaicha who ruled in Sind, and bestowed his own daughter on Shamsu'd-din Altamish, one of his own rising slaves. The successor of Bhaktiyar Khilji got confirmation from Kutbu'd-din. When Eldoz marched against Kubaicha and drove him from Multan, Kutbu'd-din marched against the former, put him to rout and entered Ghazna as conqueror (1208-9), though his success did not continue for long and he had to retreat to Lahore, before the sudden attack of his rival. Thus Kutbu'd-din was the

real founder of the kingdom of Delhi and was the first independent Muhammadan ruler of India. His own ability, his long connection with India, the prestige and reputation of Prithvi Rai's times which still clung to Delhi and its comparative nearness to the Afghan borderlands from which soldiers were largely recruited for the army—these

The factors that  
helped him

\* Kutbu'd-din was a slave from Nishapur in Persia and gradually rose to power under Muhammad Ghori whom he served loyally to the end. As his master's viceroy in Hindustan from the time of the conquest of Delhi, he was enabled to consolidate and extend the conquests made by his master and incidentally his own position. He was sur-named Aibek which might have been his real name. Some writers say he was called so because he was weak or broken-fingered. (See *Tabakat-i-Nasii*, trans. by Raverty (*Bibliotheca Indica*, 1881. p. 513. Note 1); and Thomas : *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 32.)



enabled Delhi to become the capital of the Indo-Muhamadan Empire.

After his elevation to independence, Kutbu'd-din contrived to extend his sway over all Hindustan "From Delhi to Kalanjar and Gujarat and from Lakhnauti to Lahore." But his dominion rested largely on his own personal pre-eminence; his brother-slaves were generally restive; and the more distant parts of his dominion were not thoroughly subdued. Kutbu'd-din's rule is highly

His reign :  
1206-1210 A.D. praised by historians. One writes that the Almighty had bestowed on him "such

courage and generosity that in time there was no king like him from the east to the west."\* Another contemporary historian, Hasan Nizami, writes of his rule of righteousness and of the happy results of his mercy and justice which enabled "the wolf and the lamb to drink water out of the same pond"—in other words, the Mussalman and the Hindu lived amicably together. Kutbu'd-din ranks among the great pioneers of Muslim conquest in India. He built two mosques, one at Delhi and another at Ajmer, out of the materials of demolished Hindu temples. He died in 1210 of a fall from his horse when playing polo (*chaugan*) at Lahore.

On his death the process of disintegration, which he held in check, became rapid. His weak son, Aram, was deposed within a year by Iltutmish who was the governor of Badayun; and Kubaicha quickly proclaimed his independence in Sind, while Eldoz was supreme in Ghazna; and the territory of Lahore was disputed between Iltutmish, Kubaicha and Eldoz. Many of the Muizzi and Kutbi amirs (those of the creation of Ghori and Kutbu'd-din) did not

\* The *Tabakat-i-Nasiri* written by Minhaju's-Siraj who came to India from Ghor (cir. 1227 A.D.) and named his work after his patron, Sultan Nasiru'd-din; (p. 298 of Elliot and Dowson's *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. II)

† The *Tajul-Masir* of Hasan Nizami (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II). Hasan Nizami commenced the writing of his book in 1205 A.D. and lived in Delhi during the reign of Kutbu'd-din.

like the succession of Iltutmish who was only "the slave of a slave" and had rapidly risen from very humble beginnings to the position of the foremost amir under Kutbu'd-din. Iltutmish quickly overcame all opposition from the nobles of Delhi and extended his authority as far as the

Siwalik mountains on the one side and Benares on the other. His next great task was the suppression of Eldoz who had established his power firmly in the

His suppression  
of rivals, Eldoz,  
and Kubaicha :  
1215-1217 A.D.

Punjab. The latter, already troubled

by the advance of the Shah of Khwarizm on the north and by Kubaicha on the south, was decisively defeated by Iltutmish near the fateful field of Tarain in 1215 A.D., imprisoned and put to death shortly afterwards. By 1217 A.D., Kubaicha had also been effectively driven from the Punjab, though he continued to give trouble for a few more years.

A new danger now confronted the Sultan in the shape of a threatened irruption of the Mongol hordes under the terrible Chingiz Khan, the Scourge of the World.

The Mongols were as yet heathens and they continued for nearly two centuries to be a source of great menace to the north-western frontier and of considerable anxiety to the rulers of Delhi.

The Mongol invasions were but a continuation of "the secular migrations from Eastern and Central Asia going on from the dawn of history." Chingiz Khan\* and his hordes now threatened the centres of Islamic culture all over Central Asia, Persia and Western Asia to which some of the hoarded wealth of India had already gone out. They now swept over the dominions of the Shah of Khwarizm; and the first sign of their approach was

The great  
danger from  
the Mongols

\* Chingiz Khan (1162-1227), originally known as Temujin, became the overlord of the Tartar hordes in 1175 and commenced his career of conquest in 1189. By 1219 he had conquered China and the whole of Tartary. He next swept over Khwarizm, Khorasan and Afghanistan on the one hand and, on the other, over Georgia, North Persia and Southern Russia. He died in 1227; and the territory that he and his sons conquered extended from the Yellow Sea to the Euxine. (Lane-Poole; *The Mohammadan Dynasties* (1894), p. 204).

"the flight of Eldoz into India, driven by the broken armies of the Khwarizm Shah, themselves flying panic-stricken before the victorious savages." Jalalu'd-din, the last of the glorious Khwarizm Shahs, was driven by Chingiz Khan to the Indus and thence into Sind (1221 A.D.).

Iltutmish refused protection to the fugitive monarch who, fortunately for India, turned against Kubaicha, plundered Sind and eventually reached Persia. The Shah of Khwarizm served as a buffer between the Mongols and India itself. India itself was saved for the time; and Iltutmish emerged uninjured, and even triumphant, from this turmoil. The Khwarizm Shah had fallen upon Kubaicha in his flight and greatly weakened him. The Mongols would not advance east of the Indus, fearing the heat of the country. Iltutmish now felt himself strong enough to crush his remaining rivals. In 1225 he secured the submission of Ghiyasu'd-din Khilji, the unruly governor of Bengal, who had invaded Jajnagar (in Orissa), Kamrup (Assam) and Tirhut (North Bihar) and was exercising independent sway. Two years later, Iltutmish sent another expedition under his son to punish the governor of Bengal and put down the nobles who had resisted the authority of Delhi. This was followed by yet another expedition. Some time later, he overran Sind and brought about the fall of Kubaicha who was drowned in the Indus in the course of his flight from the Sultan's victorious army.

Iltutmish also led expeditions into Malwa and Bundelkhand. The strong fortress of Ranthambhor fell into his hands in 1226 A.D.; the forts of Gwalior and Ujjayini, whose great temple of Mahakala was ruthlessly destroyed, followed suit in 1232-3. Already in 1228 the Sultan had secured the coveted diploma of investiture as the Sultan of India, from the Caliph of Baghdad, who, though powerless, was still the high pontiff of Islam. This legitimised the position of Iltutmish and greatly increased the prestige of the Indo-Muhammadan government in India.

It was an event of great historical significance and "silenced those who challenged Iltutmish's claim to the throne." From now Iltutmish struck coins bearing, in addition to his usual titles, the proud legend — "Aid of the Commander of the Faithful." He was the first to introduce a purely Arabic coinage in India and adopted, as his standard coin, the silver *tanka* (the ancestor of the modern rupee) weighing 175 grains.\*

Thus Iltutmish brought under his sway almost the whole of Hindustan except a few outlying regions. It was he who should be regarded as the real founder of the Slave Dynasty and the consolidator of the kingdom of Delhi. He was a doughty warrior and was engaged throughout his reign in military projects. But he found time to encourage the learned and the holy. He was a pious Mussalman and is credited with having built the Kutb Minar† at Delhi, "whose massive grandeur and beauty of design are unrivalled" and which stands as a still living memorial to his greatness. The contemporary historian, Minhaj's-Siraj, praises his good and strong rule which lasted twenty-six years. He is regarded as the greatest of all the Slave kings; and he added to the dominions of his predecessor

\* Earlier coins of the Muhammadans struck in India like those of Mahmud of Ghazna and his successors, bore either a marginal legend in Sanskrit or effigies of the Bull and Horseman type. The use of the native scales of weight and bilingual legends was a concession to Hindu prejudices. Iltutmish issued several types of the silver *tanka* (vide C. J. Brown: *The Coins of India*, p 70; and A. A. Macdonell: *India's Past* (1927), pp. 268-269).

† The Kutb Mosque and Minar were built in the reigns of Kutbu'd-din and Iltutmish out of the materials of destroyed Hindu temples. Some writers declare that the Minar was built by Kutbu'd-din himself. But Iltutmish is regarded correctly as its builder. There is an iron pillar with an inscription of the fourth century A.D. in the court of the Kutbi Mosque, probably set up in its present position by the Muhammadans. The Minar is said by one authority to have been built in 1231-32, in honour of the saint, Khwaja Kutbu'd-din Bhaktiyar Kaki of Ush, who was highly honoured by Iltutmish; and the name Kutb Minar is said to have no reference at all to Sultan Kutbu'd-din Aibek. (See *The Cambridge History of India*—Vol III, p. 55; and Ishwari Prasad—Note 1 on p. 142). See Also J. A. Page: *An Historical Memoir on the Qutb, Delhi* (1926): pp. 6—10.

the provinces of Sind and Malwa. All that he achieved he accomplished by himself and in the face of great odds. He was also noted for his prodigal generosity.

## SECTION II

### DISORDER AND REORGANISATION BY BALBAN (1236-1280)

Ten years of confusion followed Iltutmish's death, in the course of which the crown was tossed from hand to hand among the members of his family. Raziya, the capable daughter of the Sultan, who had already nominated her as his successor on account of her gifts and bravery in preference to his worthless surviving sons, succeeded in securing possession of the throne and retaining it for more than three years (1236-40 A.D.). She showed herself a capable ruler in many ways; and according to the contemporary historian, "she was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex, and so in the estimation of men all these virtues were worthless."\* Her partiality towards her master of the horse, an Abyssinian slave,† roused the hostility of the body of Turkish nobles, who were already resenting the power assumed by the Mamluk officers of state. One of them, 'Altunia, the governor of Sirhind, raised the standard of revolt; but the artful queen got him over to her own side and married him. In the end the rebels prevailed, brought about the capture and death of both the queen and her husband and raised one of her brothers to the throne (1240 A.D.).

During the reign of Iltutmish, the leading Turkish captains had formed themselves into a close association, known as the Forty. They monopolised all the great fiefs of the empire as well as the highest offices in the State. Altamish had contrived to keep his dignity and power intact; but after his death they became masterless and their power increased. Raziya lost her throne because she

\* Minhaj's-Siraj quoted in Elliot and Dowson: Vol. II, p. 332 and also in Raverty's *tr.*, p. 638.

† Ibn Batuta's allegation of improper relations between them cannot be accepted. Contemporary chroniclers make no mention of them.

favoured one who was not of their number; and her successor was no more than their nominee. They would accept, as the nominal ruler, one or another of the family of Iltutmish, but were determined to keep all power in their own hands.

Bahram Shah, the new Sultan, reigned but two years when he was assassinated. To add to the confusion, the Mughals had appeared before Lahore and captured it; and the army was in a very rebellious condition. A grandson of Iltutmish, by name Alau'd-din Masud, came to power.

He showed some vigour at first, but soon degenerated into a tyrant. He was cast into prison by the discontented nobles who raised Nasiru'd-din Mahmud, another son of Altamish, to the throne (1246 A.D.). The

Years of confusion: 1240-1246 A.D.

turmoil of these years was rendered worse by the reappearance of the Mongol hordes who captured Lahore in 1241 A.D. and four years later, advanced on Uchch. On these occasions Mangu Khan,\* a grandson of Chingiz Khan, ravaged the Western Punjab and Sind. Another advance of these barbarians is said to have been into Bengal through Tibet. They entered into permanent occupation of the country to the west of the Indus; and the defence of the empire against their inroads now became the most pressing necessity.

The new Sultan, Nasiru'd-din,† was an humble and pious man. He was an amiable person, but a mere puppet

and possessed the virtues of continence and frugality which earned for him, with historians, great praise for simplicity and piety.

Sultan Nasiru'd-din: 1246-1266 A.D.

\* The empire of Chingiz was, according to Mongol custom, divided among his sons. Mangu Khan's rule extended from Persia to Mongolia. He died in 1257 A.D. His successor, Khubilai, was the master of China also and became the Great Khan of all the Tartars. He is the Great Khan of Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, and the hero of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*.

† He was the patron of the historian, Minha'u's-Siraj who greatly praises him for his virtue and generosity. But Zia'u'd-din Barani, a later historian, says that, though he was a kind and devout ruler, he remained a puppet on the throne (*mameena*); and Balban, Ulugh Khan, used many of the insignia of royalty. The Sultan lived in almost complete seclusion from the world.

He was not the right ruler for these troublous times ; but he had the assistance of a very able minister in Ghiyasu'd-din Balban who was the *de facto* ruler during the reign and succeeded him as Sultan.

**Rise of Balban to power** For forty years Balban was the real ruler of Hindustan—for twenty years as

the minister and for more than twenty years as Sultan. The historian, Minhaju's Siraj, narrates at length his rise to power and distinction. He was a Turk of Albari in Turkestan and entered the service of Iltutmish in 1232 as a slave. Under Raziya he rose to be the chief huntsman ; and under her successor he was made the master of the horse and the lord of Rewari and Hansi, in return for his services in the suppression of Raziya's party. His next great service was against the Mongols who invaded Sind in 1245 when he forced them to raise the siege of Uchch.

**He becomes minister** Nasiru'd-din quickly perceived his great abilities and made him the chief minister (Deputy of the Kingdom) with the title of Ulugh Khan (1249), and married his daughter. From that day his services to the State became still more conspicuous.

He first suppressed the Khokhars and other tribes of the Western Punjab who were often helping the Mongols.

**His military services** He led several expeditions into the Doab to put down the refractory Hindu chiefs of that region, ravaged Mewat and Rantambhor, led victorious expeditions to Gwalior, Chanderi and Narwar (1246-1252 A.D.) and tranquillised the whole country as far west as Multan and Uchch.

Balban lost the royal favour for a time, due to the poisoning of the Sultan's ears by the Turkish nobles and others who were jealous of his growing power. But with his removal from government, disorders crept in ; and according to the chronicler "the business and quietude of the State were disturbed." The Turkish nobility grew rapidly discontented with the rule of the new minister who was an upstart Hindu convert ; and

Balban was quickly restored to his former position (1254). The people rejoiced greatly at this event; and as a good omen, the rains which were long holding off, fell in plenty and gladdened the earth.

Balban put down the rebellious nobles with redoubled severity and crushed the revolts of the governor of Oudh and Sind. He thrust back an invasion of Sind by the Mongols and cleared the hill country of Mewat of brigands who had been infesting the land for a number of years.

Balban arrived at some understanding with the Mongols who promised that their depredations should cease. He crowned his achievements with the assumption of the throne after the death of Nasiru'd-din, his master (1266 A.D.) (During his rule as minister he had successfully kept the Mongols in check, strengthened the frontier posts, created an efficient army, suppressed the rebellious Turkish nobility and the Hindus and preserved the strength and unity of the State which would have been greatly injured by internal disorder and external invasion.)

Now, when he became king, his first task was to re-assert the authority of the government and to re-organise the administration.

Balban was resolved on founding his dynasty and on destroying the confederacy of chiefs who had so long contributed to the weakness of the crown and the anarchy of the kingdom. He imparted "a new lustre to the throne, brought the administration into order and restored to efficiency institutions whose power had been shaken or destroyed." He placed the army in the hands of efficient captains, increased the strength of the elephantry and cavalry forces and easily cleared the country round Delhi of jungles and of the bandits who infested them. He was rigorous and impartial in his administration of justice and started a system of espionage on the doings of the nobles and officials and thus checked their oppression of the poor people. His news-writers, as the spies were called, were independent of the local officials



and it was their duty to report their misdoings also. They were selected personally by the Sultan with great care. He also cleared the Doab of its jungles, built roads along which he placed strong garrisons and thus improved trade. The severity of his measures in dealing with outlaws was great. He made a strict inquiry into the doings of the military fief-holders, especially the Shamsi Slaves, who lived an indolent life and evaded their military obligations. He dealt very severely with all the truculent nobles, and did not spare even his own cousin, Sher Khan, the warden of the western marches, who was a great barrier to the inroads of the Mongols, and a terror to the Jats, the Khokhars and other lawless tribes.

Balban maintained great dignity and pomp and upheld the majesty of the throne in a manner that was not easily surpassed. He gave up wine-drinking and other indulgences, avoided the company of low-born men and in his person set an example for the governors and nobles to follow. The two great pre-occupations which absorbed his attention were the Mongol danger and the fear of the revolt of provincial governors. He entrusted the marcher country to his own sons, Prince Muhammad and Bughra Khan, and took particular care of the provinces of Multan and Samana which were most exposed to the Mongol attacks, which were renewed from 1279. Prince Muhammad\*, known as the Khan of Multan, did his duty well and drove back

He increases the prestige of the throne

The strengthening of the marches against the Mongols

\* He was made the heir-apparent of the Empire for his ability and services. He was a prince of culture and literary tastes; and the famous poet, Amir Khushru, known as the Parrot of Hind (1253—1325 A.D.), was in his service. The poet was made a prisoner by the Mongols at the time of his patron's death; and he obtained his release only with great difficulty. He wrote an elegy on the death of the Prince and gave in one of his works a vivid account of the Mongols. "Their origin is derived from dogs. The king marvelled at their beastly countenances and said that God had created them out of hell-fire. They looked like so many white demons and the people fled from them everywhere in affright" (*vide* Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III—Appendix—p. 529). Amir Khushru died in 1325 A.D., soon after the death of his patron saint, Nizamud-din Auliya: (For a short note on his life, see Md. Habib's biography of the poet, Aligarh University).

the barbarian hordes as often as they came. But he died in battle against Samar, the Mongol leader, in 1285; and his death was a great shock to the aged Sultan and hastened him to the grave. The fear of the Mongols had a deep effect on the policy of Balban. He could have conquered Gujarat and recovered Malwa for the empire; but he was so apprehensive of a Mongol invasion that he would not leave Delhi and expose it to the fate of Baghdad which had been destroyed by their hordes. He would not attempt the conquest of any distant country; but he organised and disciplined his army to the highest point of efficiency and stayed near his capital and would not proceed on any distant campaign.

The only distant campaign that Balban waged was against the rebel, Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal, who assumed the title of Sultan and declared his independence of Delhi. After the failure of a preliminary expedition from Oudh, the Sultan himself marched, in the midst of heavy rains, on Lakhnauti and thence on to Jainagar where the rebel had fled. Tughril's army was surprised and easily dispersed; and the Sultan inflicted terrible punishments on all the relations and accomplices of the rebel, "such as had never before been inflicted on Hindustan by any king or conqueror." He then made arrangements for restoring order and entrusted the province to his second son, Bughra Khan, warning him to take example from his punishments and never attempt to be disloyal to Delhi and at the same time advising him to be serious and avoid pleasure and dissipation.

The suppression  
of Tughril  
Khan (1281-82  
A.D.)

After the Sultan returned to Delhi, he heard of the death of his elder son at the hands of the Mongols in an ambush (1285); this was an irreparable blow; and his health rapidly declined. He recalled Bughra Khan from Bengal and offered him the succession. But the latter was either too indolent or too indifferent and returned back to his province on the pretext of going on a hunt. The Sultan died; and the nobles, overlooking the claims of the son of Prince Muhammad, set up Kaiqubad, a

Death of the  
Sultan: 1287  
A.D.

weakling of seventeen and a son of Bughra Khan, on the throne. Brought up under the strict discipline of his grand-father and now suddenly freed from all restraint and raised to the highest power, the young Sultan lost his head and gave himself up wholly to pleasure and debauch.

Accession of  
Kaiqubad—Con-  
fusion—End of  
the Dynasty

The Mongols made yet another irruption into the Punjab and plundered Lahore. They were, however, fortunately driven back by the remnants of Balban's army. The monarchy was degraded ; and the new minister, Nizamu'd-din, was bent on usurping power for himself and encouraged the Sultan in his evil ways ; he set about creating a split between the powerful Khilji clan and the Turkish nobles. The Khiljis held many important posts in different parts of the country, and their leader was Jalalu'd-din Firuz, the muster-master of the army. A plot was hatched against them by the Turkish nobles ; but the Khiljis triumphed in the end. Kaiqubad did not heed the warning of his father, Bughra Khan. The latter now advanced with an army to the frontier of his kingdom of Bengal, where he had proclaimed his own independence as Sultan, on the accession of his son to the throne of Delhi. He met Kaiqubad in a friendly conference and advised him to mend his ways, warning him of the danger of the split among the nobles and of the evil designs of the minister. But Kaiqubad was incorrigible and returned to his evil ways. He was struck down by paralysis, while the nobles enthroned his infant son. Soon the child ruler was kicked to death in his own palace by a Khilji captain ; and thus ended ingloriously the Slave Line. (Jalalu'd-din Khilji succeeded to the throne, after having the minister killed and getting the support of the nobility and putting down the opposition of the people of Delhi (1290 A.D.).

There were three generations of Slaves, viz., (a) Kutbu'd-din and his colleagues, Eldoz, Kubaicha and Bhaktiyar Khiji, who built up "the momentum of empire"; (b) Shamsu'd-din Iltutmish who broke down the resistance of Kubaicha and Eldoz, maintained the

Three genera-  
tions of the  
Slave Kings

unity of the empire and vigorously pushed back the Mongol invaders; and (c) Balban, the foremost of the Shamsi Slaves, who was for forty years the real master of Delhi and effectively suppressed provincial revolts and Hindu disaffection, besides strengthening the north-western frontier against the Mongol invasions which persisted. In

**Their services** the period of this dynasty were seen the merits of the slave system of succession by which the more eminent of the slave officers became ministers and sultans and thus obviated the dangers of hereditary succession. The strong Slave Sultans maintained the momentum of the foreign empire in the country. On all the occasions when hereditary succession was tried, *e.g.*, after Kutbu'd-din, Iltutmish and Balban, it miserably failed; and the danger of disruption was prevented in most cases only by the strong hand of a slave.

The leading features of the history of Hindustan under the Slave Kings were the definite establishment of the Muslim Empire with its base in India itself instead of

**The leading features of their history** outside, the steady expansion of Muslim dominion throughout Hindustan and the increasing importance of India in the estimation of the Muslim world. The

constant fear of the Mongol invasions was, indeed, a menace to the security of the Empire, more formidable on occasions than the risk of internal disruption; but India was comparatively secure from the Mongols who ravaged all Asia from China to the Mediterranean so thoroughly. The Muslim State in India had been laboriously built up and awaited the consolidating and organising work of the Khiljis.

The Sultanate of Delhi was not yet a homogeneous political entity. The great fief-holders were practically uncontrolled in their administration. The Hindus were unchecked in Katehr (Rohilkhand); Lahore, Uchch and Multan were exposed to the Mongol inroads; and the wild tribes of Mewat threatened even the vicinity of Delhi with their depredations. The outposts against the Rajputs were numerous; and distant Bengal was practically independent. The rulers had to tolerate the faith of the Hindus, though

whenever a rebellion was crushed, numbers of Hindus were converted by force and their temples pulled down. Only the large land-holders and petty chieftains among them were disaffected. The mass of the people who were cultivators, were inert. The Sultans did not tolerate any severe oppression of them and administered a rough kind of justice to them. "On the whole it may be assumed that the rule of the Slave Kings over their Hindu subjects, though disfigured by some intolerance and by gross cruelty towards the disaffected, was as just and humane as that of the Norman Kings in England and far more tolerant than that of Philip II in Spain and the Netherlands."\*

## CHAPTER IV

### KHILJI IMPERIALISM (1290-1320)

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF KHILJI RULE

The Khilji dynasty was probably of Turkish origin, but had settled long in Afghanistan and had mixed with the Afghans.\* Jalalu'd-din's authority was established with some difficulty, for his advanced age, mildness of disposition and aversion to bloodshed encouraged sedition and disorder. He lacked "the essential qualities of the 13th century kingship;" and men no longer feared the throne. Sedition grew apace; in the second year of the reign, Malik Chhajju, a nephew of Balban, who was the governor of Karra, revolted and advanced to Delhi. He was however defeated and his fief given to the Sultan's nephew and son-in-law Alau'd-din. The Sultan next proceeded against Rantambhor, but could not take the fortress and had to satisfy himself instead with plundering some of the temples of Malwa. In the third year of the reign there was a Mongol invasion under a grandson of Hulaku Khan. The Sultan defeated them, but allowed them to retire peacefully and even permitted many Mongols to settle in Delhi: they became Mussalmans and were henceforth known as the 'New Muslims', being always a centre of intrigue and disaffection.†

Alau'd-din, the Sultan's nephew assisted in the reduction of Eastern Malwa and the capture of the fort of Bhilsa and

\*The chief Muhammadan historians are not agreed on this point; Barani, the main authority for the history of this dynasty, says that the clan was not Turk and there was no mutual confidence between the Khiljis and the Turks. Another says that the Khiljis were Turks and the clan had existed even anterior to the times of Chingiz Khan. V.A. Smith says that the Khiljis were Afghans. (Ishwari Prasad: p. 183 note; and also Elliot and Dowson: Vol. III, p. 34).

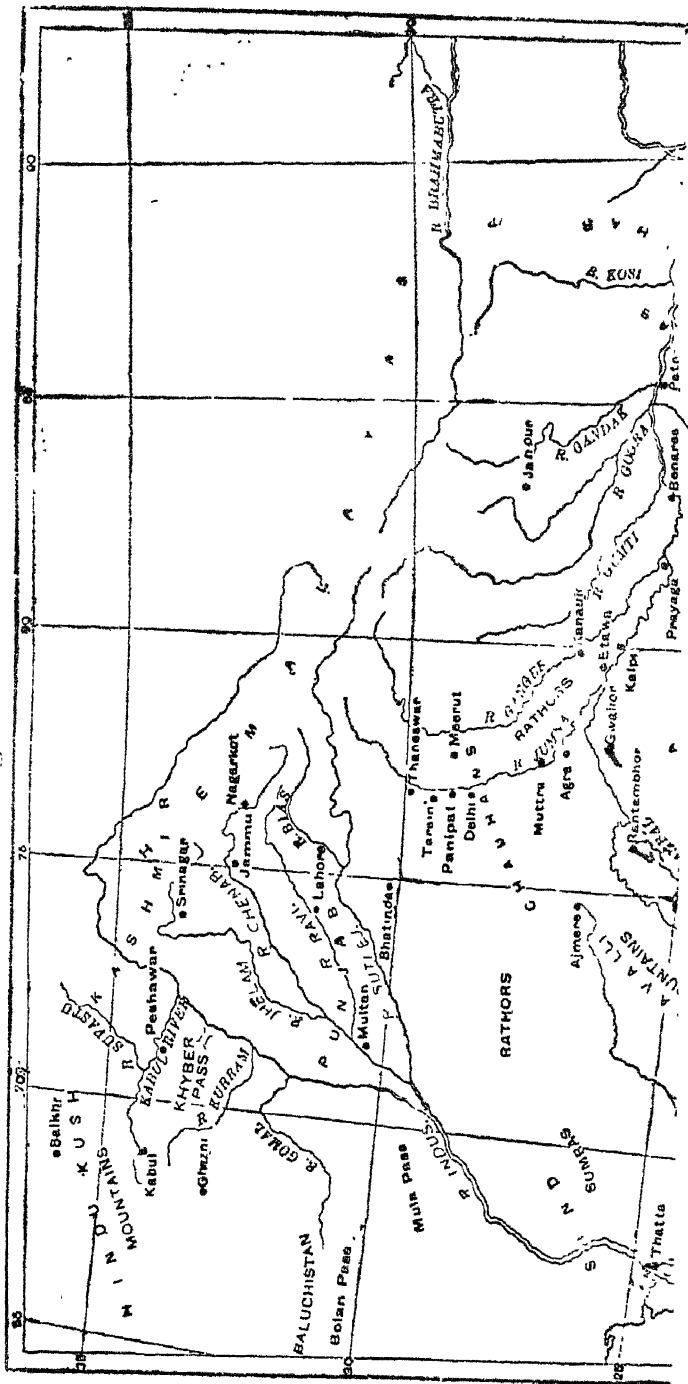
† Elliot and Dowson: Vol. III, pp. 147-148.

was rewarded with the government of Oudh (1293 A.D.). In the next year he planned an invasion of the Deccan hitherto untouched by the Muhammadans and began an expedition against Devagiri, the wealthy capital of the Yadava king of Maharashtra. He started from Karra and, proceeding by way of Elichpur, pounced upon the unprepared Devagiri which he pillaged. The Raja was besieged in the citadel of his capital and was on the point of surrendering, when his eldest son Sankara Deva, advanced to his relief. But the Hindus were defeated; and Alau'd-din, after stipulating for the payment of a very large sum of money and for the cession of the territory of Elichpur, returned through Khandesh to Malwa (1294 A.D.). The gates of the Deccan thus opened to the north, were never again closed.

Meanwhile, the old Sultan, growing suspicious of Alau'd-din's prolonged absence in the Deccan, proceeded to Gwalior where he heard the news of the latter's victory and return. Against the advice of one of his nobles who urged him to intercept Alau'd-din with the army, the Sultan returned to the capital where he was quieted by letters conveying protestations of loyalty from his nephew. He even proceeded to Karra, accompanied only by a scanty retinue, to welcome the conqueror. There he was inveigled into the treacherous interview that resulted in his cold-blooded murder (July 1296 A.D.) Alau'd-din assumed the insignia of royalty and secured the allegiance of the bulk of the nobility.

**The murder of Jalalu'd-din and the accession of Alau'd-din (1296 A.D.)**

He soon put out of the way the two sons of the late Sultan who were in Multan and also got rid of the intriguing Malika-i-Jahan, Jalalu'd-din's ambitious wife, who made desperate attempts to secure the throne for her sons. Thus Alau'd-din got possession of the kingdom; and the historian plaintively remarks: "He scattered so much gold about that the faithless people easily forgot the murder of the late Sultan and rejoiced over his accession. His gold also induced the (Jalali) nobles to







desert the sons of their late benefactor and to support him ”.

Now the new Sultan turned his attention to the driving back of the terrible Mongols. After many years of strenuous effort he was able to complete the work begun by Balban and secured tranquility on the frontier. In the second year of the reign, the Mongols invaded the Punjab in large numbers, but were thrust back by Ulugh Khan, the Sultan's brother, and by Nasrat Khan. In the following year they laid siege to Sehwan, but were again repulsed by Zafar Khan ; and their leader was taken prisoner. Shortly afterwards they reappeared under Kutlugh Khwaja and advanced as far as Delhi. The Sultan himself marched against them and, with the aid of Zafar Khan, inflicted a decisive defeat on them. Zafar Khan, “the greatest warrior of the age,” was cut to pieces by the enemy during his pursuit of them (1298 A.D.)† The Mongol raids did not cease even after this decisive set-back. In 1301, they raided Lahore; and two years later they actually approached Delhi and the Sultan was unable to meet them in the open field. He was forced to entrench his camp ; but the invaders retired after remaining before Delhi for two months. In 1304 the Mughals again invaded‡ the country and skirting the Siwalik Hills made an incursion as far as Amroha. Ghazi Beg Tughlak Khan who was the warden of Dipalpur, defeated them and put their leaders to death and was rewarded for his service with the governorship of the Punjab. This was followed by yet another Mongol raid on Multan and the Siwalik Hills ; but Ghazi Beg fell on their rear as they departed and routed

Continued invasions of the Mongols: 1296—1305 A.D.

\* Elliot and Dowson : Vol. III : Baranis *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, 157.

† The Mongols were so frightened that, afterwards, whenever their cattle refused to drink, they used to ask if they had seen Zafar Khan, “the Rustam of the age.”

‡ There are discrepancies among the different accounts of this invasion, like those of Barani, Ferishta and Amir Khushru; see M. Duff : *The Chronology of India* (1894), p. 211.

them again. The Mongols were thoroughly frightened into quiet. They never appeared again for a long time.\* The Sultan revived the frontier policy of Balban, strengthened the forts that lay on the routes of the invaders, especially the out-posts of Dipalpur and Samana, and kept a large part of the troops in the frontier stations, ever ready for action.

After the first serious danger from the Mongols was over, the Sultan turned his attention to projects of foreign conquest. In 1297, Alau'd-din planned the conquest of Gujarat which, though frequently attacked and plundered, had never yet been conquered. In 1298, Ulugh Khan, the Sultan's brother, and Nasrat Khan invaded Gujarat, sacked the temple of Somnath and captured Anhilwara (Nehrwala) and Kambayat (Cambay). The ruler of the country fled and took refuge with the Raja of Devagiri. It was in the course of this invasion that the eunuch, Malik Kafur, who rose to great power subsequently, was secured by Nasrat Khan at Cambay. Malik Kafur was a handsome castrato, probably of Hindu birth, who was raised to the high rank of Wazir by the Sultan. He played the part of king-maker after the death of Alau'd-din and was the leader of the momentous expeditions to the Deccan and South India (1307—11 A.D.). He became the foremost general of the empire after the death of Nasrat Khan, Ulugh Khan, Zafar Khan and other senior commanders.

Two years later the victorious generals proceeded against Rantambhor; but they were forced to retire; and the Sultan himself had to conduct the siege personally. The place fell after a protracted resistance by its ruler, Hamir Deva, who claimed descent from the famous Prithvi Raja, in 1301 A.D. The Sultan next planned an invasion of Telingana and himself proceeded against the state of

\* According to Barani, all fear of the Mughals entirely departed from Delhi and the neighbouring provinces. Perfect security was everywhere felt, and the *raiya*s of those territories which had been exposed to the inroads of the Mughals, carried on their agriculture in peace (Elliot and Dowson; Vol. III, p. 199).

Mewar.\* He took the city of Chitor (1303 A.D.) with great carnage and destruction;† but he  
 (2) Rajputana was unable to keep the town long under  
 (3) Malwa his subjection and had to entrust Mewar to a nephew of the Rana. The submission of Malwa was secured soon after; and the cities of Mandu, Ujjayini, Dhara and Chanderi acknowledged the sway of the Sultan. By 1306, the danger from the Mongols had entirely disappeared; the various conspiracies‡ that were hatched against the Sultan had all been put down; the whole of Hindustan acknowledged his sway; and the policy of conquest was now to be extended to the Deccan.

Now the policy of imperialism which had so far succeeded was to gain a fresh momentum in the Deccan. Alau'd-din had won his spurs at Devagiri: and he now entrusted Malik Kafur, who had been created Malik Naib, with the command of the expedition§ (1307 A.D.). On his way, Malik Kafur defeated Rai Karan of Gujarat and by a fortunate accident got possession of Deval Devi, his daughter, and

Invasions of the  
Deccan & South  
India under  
Malik Kafur  
(1307—1312)

\* The immediate cause of the invasion was the passion of the Sultan for the beautiful Padmini, the queen of Rana Bhim Singh. The story of the Sultan's treachery and of the Rani's stratagem in outwitting him is well known. Padmini and all the women in the fort died in the usual *jauhar* which preceded the last desperate effort of the defenders to repel the invaders. Some believe that this story is mythical. Contemporary writers do not refer to it.

† "The fall of Chitor, accompanied by the untold humiliation of a proud and martial race, was a stunning blow to Rajput pride and power; and for the time being, the glory of Mewar was completely eclipsed." Chitor was renamed Khizrabad, in honour of the Sultan's eldest son, Khizr Khan, who was made its ruler for the time. It freed itself some time later.

‡ The rebellion of Sulaiman Shah (the Sultan's nephew) and that of Mangu and Umar (two other nephews) in 1300 and the conspiracy of Haji Maula in Delhi during the Sultan's absence from the capital at Rantambhor, with a view to place a descendant of Altamish upon the throne and the revolt of the Neo-Muslims in Gujarat.

§ Rama Deva had not been paying the stipulated tribute regularly. Moreover Deval Devi, the beautiful daughter of Rai Karan (the expelled king of Gujarat) and his wife, Kamala Devi (who was now in Alau'd-din's harem and longed for the possession of her daughter), had to be recovered from Devagiri where Rai Karan had taken refuge. Another motive for the expedition was the desire to acquire elephants and treasure from the rich princes of the south. Even before 1300, Alau'd-din had made two attempts to get into Telingana by the eastern route; but he did not penetrate beyond Jajnagar in Orissa.

sent her off to Delhi. The princess joined her mother in the Sultan's harem, and subsequently married Khizr Khan, his eldest son. The Malik then marched to Devagiri, laying waste the country. Rama Deva sued for terms and was sent to Delhi to make his personal submission to the Sultan who received him favourably and gave him the title of *Rai-i-Rayan* (1307 A.D.)

In the next year the Malik was sent against Telingana by way of Devagiri. Its king, Prataparudra Deva, shut himself up in Warangal and offered a most desperate resistance. He finally agreed to send an annual tribute and give up all his treasures which were taken to Delhi by the Malik (1308). Soon after, Kafur left

Delhi once again for the south, in order to reduce Dwara-samudra, the capital of the Hoysala kingdom, and also to attack and plunder Ma'bar (the Coromandel Coast) which

was torn by a civil war among the Pandyas.\* The Hoysala king, Vira Ballala III (1292-1342 A.D.), had consolidated his power by many wise measures;

but he was the enemy of the Yadava, Rama Deva, who, true to his allegiance to Delhi, greatly helped Kafur. He was defeated by the Muhammadans and consented to pay a huge indemnity and become a vassal of the Sultan.

The policy of these expeditions seems to have had two objects: (1) the creation of an impression of power and (2) the getting of a large amount of treasure which was needed

for the efficient maintenance of the Sultan's army. Territory was not to be annexed. The native rulers were only to be fleeced of their treasures and

elephants. It would be impossible to govern distant territories from Delhi; direct annexation and government would only mean complications, rebellions and war. Malik Kafur

\* Sundara Pandya, the legitimate son, killed his father in a fit of jealousy. His illegitimate brother, Vira Pandya, attacked him and drove him from Madura. Sundara took refuge under the protection of the Sultan. This was the pretext for the invasion of Ma'bar, if any pretext was necessary at all.

thoroughly fulfilled these two objects in his expeditions. The Sultan had no idea of annexing more territories than could be conveniently controlled from Delhi; he gave special instructions to the Malik not to demand more than formal submission and tribute.

Kafur now turned his attention to Ma'bar and crossed the plateau to the plains below. The Malik found two rulers commanding this region and defeated and plundered both.

He plundered Srirangam and other temples and occupied Madura (1311).  
**Overrunning of Ma'bar**

The ruler had already fled from the city.

Its temple was burnt and a Mussalman garrison left in occupation of it. According to one authority Kafur raided the country down to Ramesvaram.\* He returned to Delhi with an immense booty, including a large number of horses and elephants, which much exceeded the spoils from Devagiri.

For a fourth time Kafur was sent to the Deccan to punish the infidelity of Sankara Deva, the son and successor of Rama Deva, who was defeated and beheaded (1312); and Maharashtra was once more ravaged.

All South India now lay at the feet of the Sultan. His empire embraced the whole of India from Multan and Lahore in the north to Dwarasamudra in the south and from Lakhnauti and Sonargaon in the east to Tattah (in Sind) and Gujarat in the west. It included the whole of the jungle tract now known as Central India. But though its extent dazzled the vision of men, it was "only a huge agglomeration of peoples, not knit together by any principle of cohesion or unity, and would be dissolved as soon as its master-hand was removed or its grip was relaxed."

But the Sultan tried his best to centralise all authority in himself and to give some permanence to his conquests. The

\* Dr. Venkataramaniah (*Early Muslim Expansion in South India* 1942) holds, that this account is exaggerated and that Kafur did not pass beyond Madura.

frequent revolts that took place in the early years of the reign, like the insurrection of Haji Maula, roused him from his fancied security. The Sultan had imagined, in his vanity, that he could surpass the exploits of Alexander and even be a spiritual leader like the Prophet himself. "His suggestion that he should declare himself a prophet was received in silence by his associates, but his proposal to emulate Alexander was applauded."

The Sultan now exerted all his powers for the stamping out of rebellion; he held privy consultations with wise men and finally came to the conclusion that the causes of men's disaffection were four: (1) the king's disregard of the affairs of both good and bad people; (2) wine-drinking which excites men to form friendships and coteries and create disturbances; (3) alliances and intercourse of *maliks* and *amirs* with one another; and (4) money and abundance of wealth which "engenders evil and strife and brings forth pride and disloyalty."\*

The Sultan now began a highly repressive policy. His first measure was the rigorous confiscation of property like gratuities, *inams*, and religious endowments, which were all resumed beyond a certain proportion. "The people were pressed and amerced and money was exacted from them on every kind of pretence." Money came to be scarce in the land. Secondly, he created a most efficient system of spies who reported to him all the doings of the great men and the transactions that took place in the bazaars and *serais*. Thirdly, he prohibited wine-drinking, wine-selling, the use of intoxicating drugs and also gambling. He turned out the wine-sellers and gamblers from Delhi, directed that his own supplies of wine and drinking vessels should be thrown away entirely, gave up wine-parties himself and punished all who broke his rules. These vigorous rules were very difficult to enforce and were relaxed in time. But the historian says that "after the prohibition of wine and beer in the city, cons-

Centralisation of authority in the Sultan

Measures of repression of the people

\* Barani in Elliot and Dowson: Vol. III, p. 178.

piracies diminished and apprehensions of rebellion disappeared." Lastly, the nobles were not allowed to visit one another or to form alliances without the king's consent, and this effectively prevented any combination among them for conspiracy or rebellion.

These edicts were not enough in the Sultan's opinion to stamp out rebellion and disaffection completely. He devised new rules and regulations for grinding down the Hindus. He disliked their religion and the wealth that many of them possessed and hated the turbulent rais of the Doab. His policy was to make them so destitute that they could not stir up strife, nor have any leisure from work. They were to pay one-half of the total produce of their lands. A special grazing tax on all their milch-cattle was imposed, as well as a house-tax. These taxes were to be imposed on all the Hindus; and no man was to be exempted from payment. The tax-collectors were ordered to be very strict in their collections; and Sharaf Qai, Naib Wazir, who was in charge of the revenue collections, checked abuses very strictly and punished all the officials who took bribes and acted dishonestly. The Hindus suffered a great deal.\*

Alau'd-din's government was a thoroughly military one.† The prime necessity was a well-organised army by which alone the big empire could be held together. His military reforms were far-reaching. His strengthening of the north-western frontier has been already noted. Only able

\* No Hindu could hold up his head; and in their houses, no sign of gold or silver, *tankas* or *jitals* or of any superfluity was to be seen. Driven by poverty, the wives of Hindu headmen and landholders went and served for hire in Mussalman houses. As if these were not enough, Alau'd-din fortified himself with the opinion of religious men that it was a religious duty for a Muslim sovereign to keep the Hindus in abasement and to exact the maximum amount of tribute from them. (The answers of Khazi Mughisu'd-din of Bayana, the uncle of the historian, Barani, to the Sultan's questions are quoted in Barani: p. 184 of *Elliot and Dowson*: Vol. III).

† According to E. R. Havell (*The History of Arjan Rule in India* (1918), pp. 301-2), Alau'd-din's statesmanship was summed up in the efficiency of his war-machine and in the subordination of all other human interests to its perfection. His methods of promoting it were drastic, thoroughly scientific and almost Prussian.



and tried generals were placed in charge of the army. Since the resources of the treasury were not enough to provide for the increased numbers of soldiers at the current rates of pay, the Sultan resolved that the tariffs of market prices should be so regulated and grains and other provisions so cheapened as to enable the soldier to live well on a lower pay. In this way the Sultan continued to maintain an increased army on a permanent footing without increased expenditure. His organising capacity rose equal to this task.

He drew up a tariff list, and appointed an efficient superintendent of markets to enforce these prices. Grain was accumulated in the royal granaries; the crown villages in the Doab were ordered to pay their revenue in kind; and the supply became so full that the people did not feel the pinch of high prices even in times of scarcity. Caravans and merchants were strictly ordered not to forestall and store grain. The prices of other commodities were also fixed; the merchants were registered and helped with advances to sell their articles at fixed rates. The officers of the markets performed their duties with great efficiency and punished all offenders very severely. The articles that the soldiers required, like horses, slaves, cloth, etc., were likewise controlled. These measures should have been very irksome to the merchants; but their success for the time being was complete. For a number of years the scale of prices fixed was maintained without any real hardship to the sellers. The men of the age ascribed the success of the scheme to the impartiality and zeal of the officials, the vigorous exaction of taxes which compelled the cultivators to sell without delay, the severe enforcement of the tariff-laws and the scarcity of currency which rendered the lowering of prices possible. All these regulations came to an end with the Sultan's death.\*

These military reforms and tariff control guaranteed the strength and efficiency of the army which was enabled to keep the Mongols and the refractory nobles and Hindu chiefs in check. But

\* Dr. Quereshi (*Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*) holds that this policy of control was not new, but only a development of the duty expected of Muslim kingship.

Alau'd-din's government was not merely military. It was *secular* in the sense that it was opposed to the interference of the *mullas* and the men of religion in affairs of state. "The law of the land was to depend upon the will of the monarch, and had nothing to do with the will of the Prophet. This was the guiding maxim of the new monarchy." This principle of secular government is clearly to be seen in the significant words addressed by the Sultan to the Kazi of Bayana.\*

Alau'd-din was harsh towards the Hindus not from religious bigotry, but on account of their turbulence and insubordination. Though the Sultan  
 Its object was advised that his persecution of the Hindus was not only 'lawful,' but less rigorous than the treatment sanctioned by the sacred law for misbelievers, he did not accept that view. He was thus the originator of a new line of policy deviating from the accepted lines of Muslim government. Like Akbar after him, he departed from the traditions of the previous rulers of Delhi. "He worked for the efficiency of the state; and whatever stood in the way of, or threatened to impair, this efficiency was to be ruthlessly brushed aside."†

The political system of Alau'd-din was thus complete. Its comprehensiveness and vigour had a great effect on Muslim rule in India. Alau'd-din was  
 The vigour of his political system the first king "to enunciate an imperial policy and blend it with a centralised administration and secular spirit of rule dissociated from religious bias." Under him the Muslim dominion became an imperial power; and its institutional life in the country was developed largely. His rule disciplined men's minds to a great extent, and the peace and security it fostered enabled the land to attain to comparative prosperity. Mosques,

\* "Although I have not studied the Science or the Book, I am a Musalman of the Musalman stock .... I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the state and the benefit of the people ..... I do not know whether this is lawful (according to religion) or unlawful; whatever I think to be for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency, that I decree."—*Elliot and Dowson*, Vol. III, p. 188.

† Ishwari Prasad : *Medieval India*, p. 209.

colleges and other works of public utility\* were erected in Delhi. Amir Khushru, the chief poet of the age, adorned his court; and pious men of religion like the Saint Nizamu'd-din Auliya and Shaikh Ruknu'd-din shed additional lustre.† The greatest work of the Sultan was, thus, "the solidity which he imported to the central government."

But there were essentially serious weaknesses in his system. The new conquests entailed great responsibilities.

The evils of the system      The out-posts of the Empire, in the north-west and in the Deccan, were always exposed to danger. The nobles were sick of the stringent espionage over them. The

Hindus abased and humiliated by the Sultan's tyranny, waited in sullen discontent. The trading classes resented the strict market laws imposed over them. The new Muslims settled in Delhi and elsewhere, were harshly treated and remained un-reconciled to the throne. The Sultan's authority came to be greatly weakened by his over-centralisation, repression and espionage. Malik Kafur, who attained to the highest position in the last years of the reign, superseded the ancient nobility with new up-

Malik Kafur's abuse of power      start officials dependent on himself and unfit for their offices. Under the influence of Kafur, the Sultan imprisoned his

eldest son, Khizr Khan, and put to death his brother-in-law, Alp Khan of Gujarat. A revolt broke out in Gujarat and the royalist forces sent to suppress it were defeated (1315 A.D.).

\*The Sultan, smitten with a mortal disease, died in January 1316. And Malik Kafur, the evil genius of the dynasty, blinded Khizr Khan and another brother of his and raised a third son of Alau'd-din to the throne. The old nobles, stung to indignation by Kafur's excesses,

The death of the Sultan; (1316 A. D.) and of Malik Kafur

\* The Alai Darwaza and the projected Minar which should dwarf the Kutb Minar itself: see Page's *A Guide to the Kutb*: Delhi (1927).

† For an account of Nizamu'd-din, see Maulvi Zafar Hasan's *A Guide to Nizamu'd-din* (1922), (Memoirs of the Arch. Survey of India).

formed a conspiracy and killed him together with his confederates. Kutbu'd-din Mubarak Shah, another son of the late Sultan, assumed power (1316 A.D.). At first he showed great energy and ability, abolished the vexatious market laws and took vigorous measures to suppress the disorders in Gujarat and the Deccan. He put down the revolt of Harapaladeva of Devagiri and extinguished the dynasty of the Yadavas (1318). He parcelled out the Yadava territory among Muslim officers and appointed military governors over them. He raised to great favour a low-caste convert from Gujarat, Malik Khushru, and entrusted to him an expedition to Telingana which was very successful and penetrated to the Coromandel coast also.\*

Meanwhile, the Sultan abandoned himself to debauch, losing all regard for decency. He alienated all the respectable people by his orgies and conferred supreme power on Khushru Khan. The low-born Khushru inaugurated a reign of terror and had the Sultan himself assassinated in April 1320 A.D. He even married the beautiful Princess, Dewal Devi of Gujarat, who had been married to Khizr Khan and subsequently to Mubarak.

The House of Khilji was thus extinguished; and Khushru boldly usurped the throne under the title of Nasiru'd-din. During his short reign of a little over four months, Khushru treated Mussalmans with great contempt raised his own low-caste kinsmen to high offices and possibly aimed at the re-establishment of Hindu supremacy. But the respectable Hindus would have nothing to do with him. And all the Alai nobles invited Ghazi Beg Tughlak, the warden of the marches at Dipalpur, to advance on Delhi and rid them of this pest. Ghazi Beg had held aloof from the court intrigues and was dreaded by Mubarak both as a loyal supporter of the Khilji dynasty and as a rigid Muslim. He now stood forth as the champion of Islam and advanced to Delhi, defeated and executed Khushru and in the lack of any member of Alau'd-din's family, founded a new dynasty in his own person, under the title of Ghiyasu'd-din Tughlak.

\*Hodivala thinks that Khushru was a Paramara Rajput of Malwa.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EMPIRE OF DELHI IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES (1320—1526)

#### SECTION I. THE EARLY TUGHLAKS : (1320—1351)

Ghazi Beg Tughlak was by birth a Karauna\* Turk and began service under Ulugh Khan, the brother of Alau'd-din Khilji. By his courage and capacity he

Accession of  
Ghiyasu'd-din  
Tughlak (1320  
A.D.)

rose to be the governor of Dipalpur in the reign of Mubarak. In the dark reign of the low-born Khushru Khan, when Muslim prestige was greatly degraded,

he combined with the governor of Uchch and victoriously advanced upon Delhi; and his defeat of Khushru left him almost without a competitor for the vacant throne which he ascended with the title of Ghiyasu'd-din, after some show of unwillingness. He began his rule by framing wise regulations for the relief of the oppressed peasants† and reconciling the nobles and relatives of Alau'd-din to his own dynasty. The Hindus were still looked down upon and

His regulations  
and improve-  
ments

treated as inferior beings; in matters of revenue, only so much was to be left to them, that "neither on the one hand they should become arrogant on account

of their wealth, nor on the other, should they desert their lands and business in despair." The land-revenue was improved; the assessment which was fixed at about one-tenth of the gross produce, was made after a careful estimate of the crops; and various rules were enforced to check the corruption of the officials. The departments of justice and police were also improved; and the army

\* The Karaunas were among the Mongol tribes of Central Asia who took a prominent part in the Mongol campaigns in Persia in early times. Haig considers Tughlak to be a tribal name (see *J.R.A.S.* (1922), p. 321); and *The Cambridge History of India* : Vol. III, p. 126.

† It was now, according to Edward Thomas [*The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (1871), p. 187] that the importance of the peasants in the body politic was beginning to dawn upon the Muslim mind.

organisation was rendered orderly and efficient. The regulations of Alau'd-din with regard to the descriptive rolls of troopers and the branding of cavalry horses were enforced; and the soldiers were brought under strict discipline, but were liberally paid and amply equipped. A regular system for the transmission of post by mounted messengers was established. The working of this system was witnessed and described by the Moorish traveller, Ibn Batuta.

Thus the Sultan "successfully reorganised the administration which had been thrown out of gear during the reigns of the imbecile Mubarak and the unclean Khushru." There is no extant inscription of the reign available; but the Sultan's stupendous Fort of Tughlakabad, situated east of the Kutb-Minar, which contains a citadel and, within it, the solid mausoleum of the king, is an imperishable memorial of his rule.

The heir-apparent of the Sultan, Fakhru'd-din Juna, now designated Ulugh Khan, was entrusted with the military viceroyalty of the Deccan in 1321 A.D. and led an expedition against Warangal where Prataparudra Deva seemed inclined to shake off his subjection to Muslim authority. Warangal had not been thoroughly subdued in the previous Muslim expeditions. Intrigues and dissensions broke out in the camp of the invaders;\* and Ulugh Khan had no alternative but to retire quickly upon Devagiri. The Sultan sent reinforcements for a second attack on Warangal. Ulugh Khan now marched again, reduced Bidar (the Badrakot of Ibn Batuta) on the way, captured the outer fort of Warangal as well as the royal family and treasure and soon overran a good portion of Telingana. The Raja was sent a prisoner to Delhi: the name of Warangal

\* This was possibly due to the treachery to the Sultan contemplated even thus early by Ulugh Khan; and there were also rumours in the camp that Ghiyasu'd-din had been killed or set aside in favour of a younger son. Ulugh Khan, however, succeeded in blinding his father as to his real designs. See Thomas: *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of De'hi* (p. 188). See also T. W. Haig *Five Questions in the History of the Tughlaq Dynasty* in *J. R. A. S.* for 1922: pp. 319—72.

was changed to Sultanpur; and the victorious Ulugh Khan advanced towards Jajunagar, the capital of Orissa, and returned to Devagiri by way of Telingana. From now the Kakatiyas ceased to be a predominant power in the Deccan and South India.

In 1324, the Sultan started on an expedition to Bengal, having appointed Ulugh Khan Juna as viceroy in his absence. He suppressed the rebellion that had broken out in that province and appointed his own governor. On his return from Bengal he suppressed the Raja of Tirhut\* (Mithila) and thoroughly subdued the neighbouring country. When he returned to Delhi, he was killed by the falling, whether by accident or by design, of a temporary pavilion built for his reception by Ulugh Khan† who ascended the throne as Sultan Muhammad Shah, and was commonly known as Muhammad bin Tughlak (February, 1325 A.D.).

**The Sultan's expedition to Bengal (1324)**

**His death (1325 A.D.)**

The new Sultan had no opposition at all to encounter; and his liberality made people forget their suspicions of his crime. He was "a man of mark apart from his kingship" — "generous to profusion, an accomplished scholar, abstinent, a stern defender of his faith, and the most experienced general of his day."‡ The versatility of his genius struck all his contemporaries; he was a master of the sciences, and a lover of the fine arts and had an elegant and refined taste. He was liberal-minded in mat-

**Muhammad bin Tughlak: 1325-1351 A.D.**

\* Harisimhaddeva of the Karnata dynasty fled into Nepal and established himself at Bhatgan.

† Historians are not agreed upon what actually happened. Barani does not say exactly what occurred; Ibn Batuta states clearly that Ulugh Khan was the cause of the death of the Sultan and says he heard it from an eye-witness. Later historians like Nizamu'd-din and Ferishta are still more inconsistent, either throwing suspicion upon Ulugh Khan or trying to exonerate him. Shaikh Nizamu'd-din Auliya was suspected by the Sultan of sympathy with the Prince: (Thomas: p. 189; Ishwari Prasad: p. 233; note; and Elliot and Dowson: Vol. III, p. 235). Haig: *J. R. A. S.*, 1922, p. 336; Hussain (*Rise and Fall of Muhammad Tughlak* 1938) denies the story of parricide.

‡ Thomas; *Chronicles*, p. 202.

ters of religion and was inclined towards tolerance of the Hindus and measures of social reform. Ibn Batuta graphically describes the Sultan's good points and also his blood-thirstiness, as well as his utter disregard of human suffering, while Barani denounces his rationalism, his contempt of the Mullas and his punishment of true Mussalmans.\*

It is said that the great pride of the Sultan disabled him from discriminating between small offences and serious crimes and made him punish everything with ferocity. His doings included acts of fiendish cruelty and a display of foolish generosity. He imagined himself to be at once a Solomon and an Alexander; and Barani would liken his pride to that of a Pharaoh and a Nimrod. "Both Barani and Ibn Batuta are lost in astonishment at his arrogance, his piety, his humility, his pride, his lavish generosity, his care for his people, his hostility to them, his preference for foreigners, his love of justice and his ferocious cruelty, and can find no better description of his patron than that he was a freak of creation."

The above account seems to be a fair attempt at an estimate of the Sultan's character. Most probably, he was a man born before his time; and his schemes were put forward some centuries too early. He was a man of great ability; but he proved a great failure as a sovereign. Yet the extremely unfavourable view hitherto held of him should be

\* Elliot and Dowson: Vol. III, p. 236. Both Barani and Ibn Batuta are lavish in their praise of the Sultan's generosity, as also in their condemnation of his cruelty and blood-thirstiness. Barani attributes the Sultan's cruelties to the evil influence of twelve wicked counsellors; but Muhammad was no weakling.

Superficially viewed, the Sultan seems to be an amazing contradiction. But he is really not so. The charges of blood-thirstiness and madness brought against him by later writers, are altogether untrue. No contemporary writer gives the barest indication of the Sultan's madness. The charge of blood-thirstiness was bolstered up by members of the clerical party whom the Sultan treated with open disregard. It is true that he was, like all mediæval despots, subject to great paroxysms of rage and inflicted the most brutal punishments upon those who offended against his will, irrespective of the rank or order to which they belonged. But this is quite a different thing from stigmatising him as a born tyrant, taking delight in the shedding of human blood: Ishwari Prasad; pp. 237-9. See also Gardner Brown's article in *The Journal of the U. P. Historical Society*: Vol. I, Part II.



modified ; and in view of the new interpretations forthcoming of his wild schemes, like the token currency, the transfer of the capital, his designs for the conquest of Persia and China, his cruelty and relentless taxation, the balance has to be readjusted between the Sultan and his successor, Firuz Shah, whose reign is greatly praised by historians, and who is deemed to have reaped the harvest of what his predecessor sowed.\*

The chronology of the reign is full of difficulties. The historians of the period have been very niggardly of dates. Barani, our chief authority, seldom assigns dates to events ; and Ibn Batuta, the Moorish traveller, is equally scanty in this respect. He remained at Delhi, except for a break or two, from 1334 to 1342. His account includes a long list of

Ibn Batuta in  
India

the events of the reign, of many of which he was an eye-witness. He left Delhi in 1342 at the head of a mission

which the Sultan sent to China. He went across Hindustan to Bengal and thence to Ma'bar on his way to China : and his narrative of this journey gives us "very valuable information regarding the terrible condition to which the country had been reduced by Muhammad's tyranny and misrule."†

\* Mr. G. G. Brown, quoted above, says that two of the chief authorities for the reign, Barani and Ibn Batuta, were unfavourable and hostile to the Sultan. Barani apparently wrote about the Sultan in his failing

Reasons for the  
unjust estimate

years and under a sense of depression and personal grievance, because he was unduly

favourable to foreigners. Ibn Batuta, who took service under the Sultan and was sent by him on an embassy to China in 1342 which failed to reach its destination, wrote also under a feeling of special grievance against the Sultan who refused to be generous to him after his failure : he also wrote about many of the events of the Sultan's reign only from hearsay. Shamsi-Siraj Afif, the biographer of Firuz Tughlak, obviously wrote with the object of exaggerating the merits of his master, for whose bright picture, he painted a dark background of the failure of his predecessor. Moreover both Barani and Ibn Batuta hated the Sultan's liberalism and indifference to orthodox opinions.

† Ibn Batuta was a native of Tangier who travelled over the greater part of Asia and carefully wrote down his experiences of his travels in his African home. Elphinstone and other historians summarise the character and value of his writings. He is generally truthful and throws much light on the customs and manners of the people of India where he stayed for some years from 1333. Extracts from his book are given by Elliot and Dowson. See *The Broadway Travellers : Ibn Batuta, tr.* by H.A.R. Gibb (Introd.)

One of the Sultan's earliest acts was to order the compilation of a register of the land-revenue and the expenditure of the empire on the model of the register already maintained in the districts near the capital. Registers were accordingly compiled for many provinces. The extensive empire was ill-cemented together and marked by frequent rebellions. The Sultan was often obliged to command his own armies; and though he was generally victorious, "the very fact of his absence in distant parts encouraged the disaffected elsewhere."\* In 1327-28 the king's cousin, Malik Bahau'd-din Gurshasp, whose fief was at Sagar in the Deccan and who was greatly influential, raised a rebellion which quickly assumed serious proportions. He was defeated near Devagiri and retired to the Tungabhadra where he was sheltered by the Raja of Kampli. It was probably in the course of this rebellion that the Sultan was convinced of the necessity of a more central position than Delhi for his capital. He made Devagiri his new capital, re-naming it Daulatabad (the abode of wealth)† (1327). The rebellion was soon crushed, Kampli was taken; and Gurshasp was surrendered by the

The extent of  
the empire

Revolt of  
Bahau'd-din  
(1327 A. D.)

Change of  
capital

\* One author enumerates 23 provinces of the empire which, at this time, stretched from Sonargaon to Gujarat and Sind and from Lahore to Multan and which was "far more magnificent than had been given to any of his predecessors." Edward Thomas says that the dominion became, in the very number of its sections, essentially incoherent; local feudatories had been superseded by royal governors: and all sorts of foreign adventurers were now employed, who had little or no interest in the stability of the throne and were ready to aid any rising or join an influential rebel. (*Chronicles*: pp. 203-5). He adds:—"The old proverb 'Delhi is distant,' found a new application; the royal forces were often less near to the threatened point than the inconveniently situated capital itself whose distance from the southern states had already suggested its supersession by the more central Deogir. A parallel obstacle to the permanent subjection of the provinces was to be found in the state of the roads and the general insecurity of the country at large, (*ibid*, pp. 206-7).

† Daulatabad was, indeed, a more central point from which to conquer Telingana and the Deccan and offered great advantages as a natural stronghold in its rock-fortress. North India was at peace and the Mongol raids had ceased for the time being. There were two distinct measures taken by the Sultan. The first was the transfer of the capital to Daulatabad

Change of  
Capital to  
Daulatabad

ruler of Dwarasamudra to whom he was entrusted by the Raja of Kampli.

In the same year or a little later occurred the rebellion of Kishlu Khan, the governor of Multan and Sind. The Sultan advanced to Multan, defeated and slew the rebel. From Multan the Sultan advanced to Delhi

Rising of Kishlu Khan  
(1327-8 A.D.)

to quell the disturbances that broke out in the Doab. It was during his stay in Delhi that he got incensed with both the citizens of the capital and the peasants of the Doab. He accused the former of having invited the Mongols.

Increase of taxation in the Doab

The latter were punished with an enhancement of the land-revenue which was to serve both as a punitive measure and as a method of replenishing the treasury. It failed in both of its objects. It was also now that the Sultan introduced his notorious token currency which has been stigmatised as at once mad and foolish, but which can be explained by a careful survey of the situation.\* The Sultan was not faced with bankruptcy, though his taxation policy had failed; but a continuous famine prevailed in the land and revenue suffered. Government could not prevent the fraudulent issue of token coins by private persons. People paid their taxes in the new coins; the government was

Scheme of a token currency  
(1329-32 A. D.)

when all the officials of the government were compelled to live in the new capital and build houses for themselves there. The second took place two years later when the Sultan drove the inhabitants of Delhi *en masse* to Daulatabad: and "this was less an administrative than a punitive measure." (Haig in *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 141-2). The transfer of capital by itself was not unwise or unstatesmanlike: but it caused a great amount of suffering. Both Barani and Ibn Batuta exaggerate this blunder and the miseries caused to the people; and the latter relates gossips about the Sultan's relentless search of Delhi for any lurking inhabitants. When the Sultan saw the failure of the scheme, he arranged for the people to return back to Delhi which, however, did not recover its prosperity for a long time.

\* The transfer of the capital, the construction of Daulatabad, the suppression of the revolts of Bahau'd-din and Kishlu Khan, the failure of the taxation policy and the continued prevalence of famine must have severely taxed the resources of the state. Moreover the Sultan had ambitious schemes of conquest and maintained a

defrauded ; gold and silver became scarce ; and all commerce, particularly foreign trade, was paralysed. Foreign merchants paid in the tokens, but refused them in payment of their own goods sold. When the Sultan saw that the scheme had failed, he gave the people good coins in the place of tokens, huge quantities of which were got in the treasury, and thus restored public confidence, and the people quickly forgot this episode.

Towards the end of 1330, the Sultan returned to Daulatabad. For the next two years there was nothing important ; but things steadily declined from bad to worse. The Sultan began to cherish fantastic schemes of extending his sway over Transoxiana and Persia and encouraged many natives of those countries, specially Khorasanis and Mughals, to settle in India, by means of lavish gifts.\*

The effects of the heavy taxation imposed on the Doab quickly made themselves felt. The officials of the Sultan levied and exacted the taxes at the enhanced rates and did not make allowances for the severe prevailing famine. The rural population had their backs broken ; many rose up in open rebellion and turned into bandits and highwaymen.

very large army for the projected invasion of Khorasan. But it is wrong to say that he wanted to deceive his subjects. Throughout his reign he evinced a great interest in the reform of the coinage. He had the examples of the great Tartar, Kubla Khan, and of the Persian ruler, Gaikhatu, both of whom had issued token coins and caused great misery to the people. And unlike them he prescribed no penalties to enforce his commands. He was also ignorant of the limitations of a fictitious currency. When he saw that his scheme failed, he withdrew all the coins. (See Ishwari Prasad : *Mediaeval India*, pp. 244-248 : and his article, " Muhammad Tughlak as a Financier " in the *Allahabad University Magazine* for 1922 ; also E. Thomas : *Chronicles*, pp. 239-245).

The Sultan struck gold, silver and copper coins : the relative value between gold and silver seems to have been about 8 to 1. Even in the beginning of the reign, the coinage system had been reconstructed.

\* These men, particularly the Khorasanis, encouraged him in his plans ; and the Sultan maintained an army of 370,000 men for one full year for the projected invasion. Moreover, the Sultan of Egypt and the Mongol ruler, Tarmashirin, from whom he expected help, failed. The Sultan was soon forced to abandon the scheme ; and it was a wise act on his part to have done so.

This state of affairs in the Doab recalled the Emperor from Daulatabad to Delhi. He treated the province as a hostile country and led a punitive expedition into it, destroying crops and massacring the people. It was

**The Sultan's belated measures of remedy** only long afterwards that the Sultan attempted to remedy the situation. He ordered wells to be dug and advanced

loans to peasants. But the remedy came too late; and the famished population, soured by seven long, lean years of famine, "failed to profit by it and gave up the ghost in sheer despair."

Meanwhile Jalalu'd-din Ahsan who had his headquarters at Madura in the south and governed the province of Ma'bar (Coromandel Coast) had risen in rebellion (1334-35 A.D.)\* The Sultan set out from Delhi

**Revolt of Ma'bar (1334-35 A.D.)** to reduce it and advanced through Daulatabad into Telingana. At Warangal,

a pestilence, probably cholera, broke out in the army and carried away large numbers. The Sultan himself was smitten and could proceed no further. Ma'bar could not be subdued and remained independent for fifty years, after which it was destroyed by the Rayas of Vijayanagar. After arranging for the proper administration of northern and southern Telingana, and crushing a rebellion at Daulatabad, he reached Delhi in the middle of 1337 A.D. † As he passed through Malwa, the famine was raging fiercely in the land; and Delhi itself was equally bad.

Another rebellion broke out, in the meantime, at Lahore which was crushed by Khwaja Jahan after some difficulty. This was followed by isolated risings in the neighbourhood of Delhi and in Bidar and by the failure of

\* Barani and other historians give a wrong date to this rebellion. Ibn Batuta gives a clear date; he is supported by the legends on the coins of Ahsan Shah who proclaimed his independence in A.H. 735. He is also confused with Alau'd-din Hasan Khan who founded the Bahmani dynasty a little later. The Madura Sultanate lasted till 1370-1, when it was absorbed by Vijayanagar (See Haig in *J. R. A. S.* 1922, pp. 344-5).

† In the course of his retreat, the Sultan suffered from a severe toothache; and the tooth was extracted and buried; and in his vanity the Sultan erected over it a domed tomb, known as the "Dome of the Tooth" which is still standing near Bir. (*Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of H. E. H. The Nizam's Dominions for 1920-21*, p. 14)

the Sultan's disastrous attempt to conquer Tibet, the large army that was sent being practically annihilated (1337-38 A.D.) \* But the object of the expedition, the subjugation of the hill tribes, was achieved. The campaign ended in the loss of a great army and an enormous quantity of treasure and greatly diminished the strength and reputation of the Sultan; and everywhere disaffection blazed into rebellion.

There was a marked decline in the Sultan's power from 1335 A.D. when Ma'bar declared its independence. Great suffering prevailed in the Doab owing to continued famine; and only the province of Oudh which had prospered under the good rule of AINU'L-MULK, was able to supply corn for the relief of the hungry people. The Sultan founded a new town, known as SWARGADWARA (the Gate of Heaven), on the Ganges about 150 miles from Delhi, where the people were fed from the full granaries of Oudh. The Sultan attempted a division of the country into square districts of about 1,800 square miles in area in which land was to be intensively cultivated. This proved to be a mere pious wish and was impossible of realisation. It was when the Sultan was still at this new place, that FAKHRU'D-DIN, one of the captains of the governor of East Bengal, slew his master and assumed independence. The Sultan was too much occupied with his Himalayan expedition and measures of famine-relief to send an expedition to Bengal which revolted in 1338-39 and was lost to the empire (1338-39 A.D.). FAKHRU'D-DIN was the first independent Sultan of Bengal.

\* The expedition was given the high-sounding name of the invasion of China by historians like Baran. It was, more likely, a scheme for the reduction of the hill states lying in the region of the lower Himalayas, in the neighbourhood of Nagarkot, the capital of Kangra, which had fallen to the Sultan's arms in the course of the same year. KARAJAL (the district that was the object of the expedition) was actually conquered before 1341. The expedition failed owing to floods, disease and ambuscades laid by the hill-tribes. In the 14th and 15th centuries the limits of China verged very closely on the frontiers of India.

Shortly afterwards a rebellion occurred in the Deccan; another followed in Oudh, whose strong governor AINU'L-MULK rose. These, though put down, greatly weakened the Sultan's prestige. **The Sultan gets confirmation from the Caliph of Egypt** He now thought of having his position strengthened by the pontifical authority of the Caliph of Islam.\* He could not easily find the rightful Caliph who could confirm him and finally got at a phantom living in Egypt who was descended from the House of Abbas, to whom he sent a petition and whose name he substituted for his own on the coins of the empire.

Ibn Batuta, as already mentioned, left the Emperor as his envoy to China in 1342. His account of his journey discloses how every province in Hindustan was seething with revolt and the Muhammadan captains were not safe even in their fortresses. Brigands multiplied owing to large numbers of Hindus abandoning their villages and building strongholds in the jungles. There were three different parties among the nobles : (1) the hereditary amirs who were influential and had large followings ; (2) slaves and others who rose to high positions by royal favour and who were used as a counterpoise against the hereditary nobles ; and (3) a number of ' Amirs of the Hundred,' or centurions, who had come from the Mughal invading armies and settled in the land in the time of the Khiljis. They had been treated badly by Alau'd-din ; and since then they had been giving trouble. They were the leaders of many of the insurrections and had made themselves odious to the Sultan. " He attributed the origin of every disturbance to these 'centurions,' who supported, in the hope of plunder, every turbulent knave who raised his head in rebellion." Many of

\* The Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad had long been puppets in the hands of their Turkish Mayors of the Palace and had finally been extinguished by the Mughals in 1258. After diligent inquiries from travellers and foreigners, the Sultan learnt of the existence of an Egyptian Caliph, sent an humble petition to him and had his name substituted for his own on the coins of the empire.

them were in occupation of strong positions in Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan.

The Sultan also took vigorous measures to put down their turbulence. He also attempted to reorganise the government of the Deccan, increased the revenue demands for the various districts and enforced their strict payment.

**Their revolt in Malwa and Gujarat (1344-45 A. D.)** When he heard of the rising in Gujarat he promptly marched to that province, defeated and dispersed the rebels, many of whom fled to Devagiri and the hill-district of Baglana. For some time the Sultan remained in Gujarat, making arrangements for the proper collection of revenue and punishing ruthlessly the remaining amirs.

These measures increased the discontent of the Foreign Amirs in the Deccan. They openly rose against the governor of Devagiri, slew him, seized the treasure accumulated in the fortress and made one of themselves, Ismail Makh Afghan, their leader, and placed him on the throne (1346-47 A.D.). Muhammad Tughlak personally marched to Devagiri, seized the fortress and dispersed the rebels who fled towards Gulbarga. While engaged in settling the affairs of Devagiri, the Sultan heard that a slave, by name Taghi, had risen in Gujarat along with some of the Foreign Amirs. He had to march back to Gujarat and could defeat the rebel army only with difficulty. Taghi, however, managed to escape and took refuge in Sind.

Meanwhile the Deccan rebels who had fled towards Gulbarga, returned at the head of a large army, drove away the imperial forces towards Malwa and occupied Devagiri. Hasan Kangu, their leader, was proclaimed king (August 1347) under the title of Alau'd-din Bahman Shah, who thus founded the Bahmani dynasty of the Deccan. The provinces of the extreme south also fell off from allegiance; and the whole country south of the Tungabhadra became independent, while the Hindus reasserted their power in Warangal.



The Sultan resolved to give up the attempt to recover the Deccan for the time being. He resolved to put down the traitor. Taghi, first,\* and proceeded to Girnar and thence to the land of the Sumera tribe in Thatta in Sind. According to Barani, he spent three years in settling the affairs of Gujarat. When nearing Thatta, after gathering a large force, he contracted a fever and died after a few days' illness (March, 1351). Barani wrote that "the king was freed from his people and they from their king". At his death, Bengal and Ma'bar had become openly independent. The Deccan was defiant under the Bahmani Sultan. Vijayanagar had come into vigorous being. But the Muslim dominion in Hindustan remained almost intact. The course of the Indus continued to be its approximate western boundary. The shrinking of the empire was the inevitable result of the Sultan's repressive and cruel policy.

The stupendous failure of Muhammad Tughlak's reign was due partially to his temper and lack of statesmanship, but largely to circumstances beyond his control. A severe famine which raged for more than ten years, set his subjects against him. He had, indeed, some very good traits. In one respect he was liberal minded and showed "a greater regard for the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus than his predecessors have ever done." He appointed some of them to high offices. He tried to prohibit the custom of *sati*; and he left the Rajput states unmolested. He did not give way to the wishes of the Ulema (men of religion of Islam) and endeavoured to secure adequate and impartial justice even as against the powerful and the great. Ibn Batuta gives us the details about his elaborate system of judicial administration. His even-handed justice

\* The Sultan felt so depressed as to consult Barani in regard to what other kings did in similar circumstances. The latter advised him to abdicate or retire from active exercise. The Sultan however resolved to continue to punish the people till he had chastened them by constant suffering. He said, "I punish the people because they have all at once become my enemies and opponents." (Elliot and Dowson : Vol. III, 254-6.)

was a source of grievance to the privileged classes. He employed a very large number of foreigners in his service, treated them with great generosity and invited men of ability from other lands. This injured the interests of the hereditary nobles and the official class to which Barani belonged; and this, along with his stern justice, led to his condemnation by the priestly class and to an outcry against his extravagance. "The verdict that declare him a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant like Nero or Caligula, does little justice to his great genius, and ignores his conspicuous plans to cope with famine and his efforts to introduce ameliorative reforms. He possessed an intellect and a passion for practical improvement, which we rarely find in mediaeval kings. But his task was an extremely onerous one. He had to deal with the problems of an ever-growing empire with a staff of officers who never loyally co-operated with him. In view of these extenuating circumstances, the common opinion about the Sultan's character and policy needs to be revised." \*

## SECTION II. FIRUZ SHAH AND THE LATER TUGHLAKS

The conditions of the army at the death of the Sultan was deplorable and it had to make a disorderly retreat. Firuz bin Rajab, his cousin, was one of the Council of Regency appointed when the Sultan left the capital in 1345; and he was present at the death-bed of the Sultan. He assumed command after some hesitation and succeeded in withdrawing the army without serious disaster to Delhi. He was supported by the citizens of Delhi and by Malik Makbal Khan, an able Hindu convert from Telingana who was made the minister. Both Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif declare that Firuz was nominated by Muhammad as his successor: and an infant son of the late Sultan who was set up on the throne in Delhi, was quickly set aside. †

\* Ishwari Prasad: *Mediaeval India*, p. 259.

† Both Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif, author of the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* quoted in Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, were warm adherents of Firuz who, they say, was regarded as a son by the late Sultan. Khwaja Jahan who set up the infant, quickly submitted and was later killed by some amirs. Haig holds that Firuz was a usurper who set aside the claims of Sultan Muhammad's son.

The new Sultan had been carefully trained in administrative work by his cousin and had gained experience of government. But he was lacking in courage and warlike zeal and was “a man of irresolute will and vacillating temper”. He was a bigoted and narrow-minded Mussalman, very pious and regular in his religious observances, “who followed the straightest path of orthodoxy and in the management of government employed the theocratic principles of the Quran”. He persecuted both heretics and infidels and largely encouraged conversions to Islam. He was a fanatic like Aurangzib, but lacked many of the great qualities of the latter.\* He never transacted any business without consulting the Kazis and the Maulvis; and, moreover, he was superstitious, looking frequently to the Quran for an augury. He had, however, some very good qualities. He hated bloodshed, abolished torture by royal decree and discouraged espionage. He was a lover of learning and a patron of scholars and built and endowed colleges where Moslem theology was studied. He was anxious to introduce administrative reforms, cared for the peasants, cut several canals and provided facilities for irrigation and built a hospital at Delhi. He was a lover of buildings and gardens and erected several new cities. Thus he founded the town of Firuzabad on the Jumna, ten miles from Delhi where he frequently resided, the fort of Hissar Firuza and Fathabad, both in the province of Delhi, Firuzpur near Badaon, and the new city of Jaunpur in honour of his cousin, Sultan Muhammad Juna. At Firuzabad he set up one of the two Asoka Pillars which he removed from their original sites. In 1355, he cut a canal

\* These have caused the Muslim chroniclers to bestow fulsome praise on him and his virtues. Barani says that no sovereign, since the time of Muhammad Ghorî, had sat on the throne of Delhi, so humble and pious as Firuz. Afif was attached to the court of the Sultan and accompanied him on his tours and hunts: and his “untiring strain of eulogy” was clearly intended to bring the virtues of his patron into bold relief and in marked contrast with the previous reign. He paints in black colours the condition of Hindustan under Muhammad bin Tughlak and gives an ample account of this “Akbar, of the fourteenth century” and of his virtues, munificence and good works. (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 269, *et seq.*)

from the Sutlej, and in the next year dug another canal from the river Jumna to Hansi, near which he built Hissar Firuza. Ferishta credits him with a large number of public works, including canals, bridges, baths, forts, colleges and serais. The Sultan planted numerous gardens near Delhi, entrusted the construction of canals to skilled engineers, levied on the cultivators a special water-rate and reclaimed large areas for cultivation. The Sultan is still remembered for his canals and irrigation works. Above all, he was ready to avail himself of the help of resolute and capable advisers like Makbal Khan, the Wazir, and his son. Makbal Khan was the chief minister for nearly two decades and died in 1372; he was followed in his high office by his equally able son, Jahan Shah, who remained minister for a number of years.

Firuz is highly praised by some writers as marking a new régime of gentleness and consideration towards the peasants. This is probably largely true; but to say that "in secular matters he was guided by the high ideals of a royal race which his Rajput mother had taught him" and that "it was at his Rajput mother's knee that he learnt the lesson of *noblesse oblige* and the great traditions of Aryan polity which guided him in after-life," as Mr. E. B. Havell and Sir H. Elliot do,\* is to carry praise too far. So also is the tendency to compare the weak-minded Firuz with the great Akbar and Asoka merely on the strength of a few administrative and humanitarian reforms which he carried out. †

The Sultan's foreign policy was a failure to a large extent. He had, indeed, brought the army safely from

\* *History of Aryan Rule in India* (1918), pp. 317 and 319. See also Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 269-70. Firuz's chroniclers attribute his virtues as a man and as a king to his training at the hands of his predecessor and his devotion to Islam. Havell says that his outlook was largely moulded by his brave Rajput mother, the beautiful Bibi Naila, the daughter of Rana Mal Bhatti, who willingly married Rajab, the younger brother of Ghiyasud-din Tughlak, when he was the warden of the marches, in order to save her people from the oppression of the Tughlak captain who demanded her hand in marriage for his brother on pain of punishing the Rajputs if she should refuse.

† *The Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi* or Autobiographical Memoirs of the Sultan (vide Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 374-388) is a brief summary of the *res gestae* of his reign and gives an account, in his own

Sind to Delhi on his accession, in the face of the attacks of the Mongol mercenaries, who, some years later, raided even Dipalpur. The long reign was to a large extent free from the invasions of the Mongols, of which there are recorded only two, both of which were fortunately driven back. But his generalship, as displayed in his two campaigns to Bengal (1353-54 A.D. and 1359-60 A.D.)\*, and in his eventual reduction of Thatta (1371-72 A.D.), shows his lack of strategical skill and military ability. In his Bengal campaigns, he could not put-down Ilyas Shah who had assumed complete independence under the title of Shamsu'd-din; and though he is supposed to have won a victory, he decided to retreat to Delhi and not to annex the province. A second expedition became necessary against the son of Ilyas Shah; and the Sultan gave up the struggle when the enemy was about to surrender in his fort of Ikdala. Thus he could not restore the authority of Delhi over a province which was so near his grasp. On his return, he, however, marched against Jainagar (Orissa) pursued its Brahman ruler who fled, and plundered the temple of Jagannath. The conquest of Nagarkot that he undertook soon after his second Bengal campaign, in 1360-61 A.D., resulted only in the submission of the ruler and in the plundering of the famous temple of Jwalamukhi. The Thatta expedition the object of which was to punish its ruler, ended in the Sultan's retreat into Gujarat from that fort for the purpose of getting reinforcements: he was misled on his way by his guides into the Rann of Cutch, and his army suffered great privations for six months, during which time no news of him reached Delhi, where the Wazir kept order only with

words, of his activities in the cause of the true religion (Islam). They breathe a humanitarian spirit, but are not free from sectarian bias and recount his abolition of torture and of several unjust taxes, his buildings and his suppression of Mussalman heretics and of Hindus.

\* For details, see N. K. Bhattasali : *Coins and Chronology of the Independent Sultans of Bengal* (1922), pp. 25-51. Firuz is not shown by the light of evidence, to have gained the upper hand in either campaign.

great difficulty. The Sultan, however, refitted his army in Gujarat and marched with reinforcements a second time against Thatta when its Jam submitted.

The Sultan allowed the Deccan to continue independent, though he planned an expedition to it soon after his accession; and the empire was confined to the region north of the Vindhya; while Bengal was outside the pale of Delhi.

Firuz Shah's administration seems to have been mild on the whole. The ryots were not oppressed; the whole system of taxation was reorganised; and vexatious and unlawful dues were stopped. Agriculture, encouraged by the king's irrigation works and mild revenue system, revived; and according to the chronicler, Shams-i-Siraj Afif, "the homes of the ryots were replete with grain property, horses and furniture; every one had plenty of gold and silver, no woman was without her ornaments; and no house was wanting in excellent beds and couches; wealth abounded and comforts were general".\* The historian contrasts this state of prosperity with their condition under former sovereigns. Market prices were lower than they were in the days of Alau'd-din; and there was no scarcity felt of the necessaries of life. The land revenue allowed a margin for the subsistence of the cultivator; and there was an appreciable increase in the area under cultivation. A large number of garden-villages flourished in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Benevolences imposed on governors were stopped: and octroi duties were removed so that prices fell and trade increased.

The system of taxation left the Sultan a large surplus every year to spend on works of utility and charity.

Prominent among these were his canals, gardens, colleges and hospitals. He restored the old gardens and planted numerous orchards, all of which yielded a large income. He also reclaimed waste lands; and he contrived by

\* Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 290. The Sultan levied an irrigation cess of one-tenth of the produce of the land.

these means to increase the revenue\* of the empire, in spite of its diminished extent.

The Sultan is also said to have improved the system of coinage; he possibly introduced a larger and more systematic supply of gold and silver coins. He struck also half and quarter *jitals* of mixed copper and silver which were largely used by the poorer classes of the people and remained in circulation for a long time afterwards.

The royal household was reorganised. Its establishments, known as the *kharkhanas*, were given separate offices and accounts. Large bodies of artisans were employed by the state and worked under trained superintendents. Slaves were imported in large numbers from various parts of the country. For their proper management, a separate office was created. These slaves were trained as artisans and craftsmen or devoted themselves to the study of literature and religion. They proved to be a huge drain on the empire's resources and ultimately came to be destructive of its integrity.

The Sultan's patronage of learning has been already noticed. He gave pensions and *jaghirs* to learned men and founded numerous colleges, of which the royal *madrassa* of Firuzabad became very famous. He was fond of history; and it was in his reign that Barani and Shams-i-Siraj wrote their works. He invited learned professors of theology from distant Muslim countries and had some Sanskrit works translated into Persian. He created a large fund for the relief of the poor, gave work to a great number of unemployed men and had the daughters of poor and respectable citizens married at his own expense.

Some of his reforms were of doubtful expediency. He revived the *jaghir* system† which had been discontinued by

\* Shams-i-Siraj Afif incidentally tells us that the revenues amounted to 60,850,000 *tankahs* or £6,085,000, of which the revenues of the Doab alone amounted to 8,000,000 *tankahs*.

† Fief-holders sub-divided their fiefs; even the soldiers of the army received grants of land. Great nobles were given whole districts and provinces. These powerful feudal nobles contributed not a little to the break-up of the kingdom after the Sultan's death. (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 289, 328 and 340.)

Alau'd-din who saw the evils of assigning rights of revenue collection in lieu of direct payments. His large slave-establishment<sup>1</sup> were very dangerous, particularly those of them who were on guard at the palace. Even his apologist, Shams-i-Siraj, could only obscurely explain the wisdom of this policy. Again he was intolerant towards the Hindus, forbade public worship of idols and the painting of portraits and imposed the *jaziya* on the Brahmans who had been hitherto exempt. This was followed by a great amount of protest and outcry which had not much effect. He desecrated temples (as at Jagannath) and actively promoted the process of conversion to Islam.\* He was equally hard upon Moslem heretical sects like the Shiah, etc. Under him government took on "a predominantly theocratic character"; and "the intolerance of the Sultan was reflected in the administration."

Thus the reign of Firuz came to a close in mingled sunshine and cloud. With a diminished empire, but with its resources more fully developed, with a name for humanity and good deeds, but intolerant towards the Hindus, with a zeal for reform, but withal paving the way, by means of slaves and fief-holders, for the empire's break-up, Firuz went through his peaceful reign of thirty-seven years. He was a much better sovereign than Nasir-ud-din of the Slave dynasty; and his benevolence was of an active type, though perhaps indiscriminate. His tolerance of corruption and lenience towards evil-doers destroyed the effects of his beneficial measures. Uncharitable critics say that his generosity was probably due "as much to vanity as to benevolence." His last days were clouded by troubles. His eldest son died in 1374. Hostilities broke out between his next son, Prince Muhammad, and the Wazir, Khan-i-Jahan the Younger owing to the latter's usurpation of all power in the state. The Wazir was disgraced and put to death; and Firuz made his son his co-regent and

\* His own *Memoirs* give plenty of evidence of his intolerant zeal. (Elliot and Dowson, pp. 380-2, Vol. III). He also prided himself upon his getting confirmed by a phantom Caliph,



retired into private life. Some time later, the regent was driven out by the slaves of the Sultan who appointed one of his grandsons, Ghiyasu'd-din by name, as his heir and died shortly afterwards at a very advanced age (October, 1388). The new Sultan was deposed and done to death after a short and vicious reign of five months ; and his successor, Abu Bakr, had to fly from Delhi after a troubled reign of a few months.

The good features of Firuz's reign, his humanitarian measures, administrative reforms and other beneficent activities could not stay the hand of disintegration. "The reforms of Firuz lacked permanence. They failed to strengthen the Muslim polity and to gain the confidence of the Hindus whose feelings were embittered by his religious intolerance." Firuz lacked military capacity and the will to go into the details of administrative business ; but he chose his ministers well and with discrimination, and succeeded in improving the tone of the administration, and in winning the affection of his subjects. His system of decentralisation proved fatal in the hands of his weak successors.\*

After some difficulty, Muhammad, Firuz's son and co-regent, who had been expelled, gained the throne under the title of Nasiru'd-din and contrived to keep it, in spite of some fighting, till his death in 1394 A.D. He deprived the old slaves of Firuz Sha of much of their power and was strongly supported by the Hindus of Mewat and by a Hindu chief named Rai Sarwar—an indication of the increasing importance of the Hindus and of the native Muhammadans, as opposed to the foreigners in the kingdom. The reign was marred by the prevalence of general disorder, by a rebellion in Gujarat and by a rising of the Rahtor Rajputs living beyond the Jumna. The weakness of the royal power was everywhere plainly seen.

\**The Cambridge History of India*, Vol III, p. 189.

He was succeeded by his son, Humayun, who died in a few weeks. The throne was now occupied by his younger brother, a minor, who took the title of Mahmud Tughlak II, and was a weak and incompetent ruler, destined to be the last of his line. A number of factions prevailed in the capital itself. Hindu chiefs and Muslim officials openly disregarded the authority of the Sultan; and everything was in confusion from Kanauj to Bihar.

Muzaffar Khan, the governor of Gujarat, assumed independence (1396). Malwa under Dilawar Khan Ghorī (1401) and the little province of Khandesh under Nasir Khan (1399) likewise followed suit. Malik Sarvar, Khwaja Jahan, the Wazir of the Sultan, deserted his sovereign and founded an independent government at Jaunpur whence he and his successors ruled for a time over Bihar, Oudh and Jaunpur, with the title of Sultan-i-Sharq (King of the East), 1394. The Khokhar tribe rebelled in the north. For over two years Delhi was torn by a civil war between the Sultan and Nasrat Khan, another grandson of Firuz, who, with the support of a considerable number of nobles, claimed the throne for himself and established himself in Firuzabad.

Rivalry of Nasrat Khan

The turbulent governors took no part in these struggles; and at length, after three years of protracted confusion, in 1396, Ikbal Khan, a powerful party-leader who had succeeded Khwaja Jahan as the Wazir, gained a decisive victory for Mahmud and set him on the throne, making of him a mere puppet (1398 A.D.)

Scarcely was the internal crisis ended when the empire was convulsed with the invasion of Timur, the Mongol conqueror,\* another great scourge of the world like Chingiz

\* Timur or Timur Lung (Timur the Lame), commonly corrupted into Tamerlane, was related to Chingiz Khan and born in 1335 A.D. In 1380 he began a long series of campaigns in Persia and overran Khorasan, Afghanistan, Seistan and many parts of Persia. He then conquered Baghdad and Mesopotamia and defeated the Great Khan of Tartary. In 1398 he invaded Northern India and in the next year raided Kashmir and Delhi. In 1401 he invaded Asia Minor, defeated the Osmanli Turks and then subdued Syria and received the homage

Khan. He had heard of the weakness of India and now despatched, as his advance-guard, an army commanded by his grandson, Pi-  
**Timur's invasion (1398-99)** Muhammad, who besieged Uchch and captured Multan after a siege of six months (1397-98). Meanwhile, Timur himself advanced with a large army across the Hindu Kush and by way of Kabul, to the Indus. Crossing the Indus, he marched by the side of the Jhelum into the Punjab. After defeating the Khokhars and Mubarak Khan, the governor of the Punjab, who made a feeble attempt at resistance, Timur crossed the Beas, captured Bhatnir, Sarsuti and other places and advanced by way of Panipat, unopposed, on Delhi. The Sultan and his Wazir, Ikbāl Khan, marched out of the city to give battle to the invader. But Timur's horsemen outflanked the Indian army which retreated from the field in the wildest disorder and left all the war-elephants in the hands of the victors (Dec. 1398). Muhammad Tughlak fled into Gujarat. Delhi submitted under a solemn promise of protection made by Timur who was proclaimed the emperor of India. It was given over to pillage and massacre Timur's soldiery for several days.

The sack of Delhi and the massacre of its people which continued for five days, form a most tragic episode in the history of that city. Such a result was a  
**The sack of Delhi** "constant concomitant of Tamerlane's promises of protection, that we are at a loss to ascribe it to systematic perfidy, or to the habitual ferocity and insubordination of his troops." On this occasion the most credible accounts attribute the commencement to the latter cause.\* After everything was plundered

of Egypt. He died in 1405 while planning a march against China. His capital was Samarkand in Transoxiana, from which he organised a reign of terror. His empire was short-lived, being too unwieldy, and quickly broke up. His descendants were the Great Mughals of India.—(Lane-Poole: *Mohammadan Dynasties*, pp. 265-8). For an estimate of his character, see Elphinstone (5th ed., pp. 416-7) who compares him with his kinsman, Chingiz Khan.

\* Elphinstone: *History of India* (5th ed., p. 415). The *Zafar-Nama* of Sharafu'd-din, a very partial biography of Timur (Elliot, Vol. III,) and the *Maifuzat-i-Timuri*, an autobiographical memoir of the conqueror, translated by Elliot (Vol. III, p. 389, *et seq*), and by Major Stewart, give an idea of the sack as having been caused by the turbulence of the Turkish soldiery and the spirited resistance of the Hindus of the city.

and the troops became weary of the slaughter, Timur gave the order to retreat, carrying away an immense booty and a large number of slaves including many

**The return of Timur (1399)** skilled masons and artisans. On his way back, he razed the fort of Mirat (Moerut),

raided the valley of Hardwar and made an expedition into the Siwalik Hills where a Hindu Rai was defeated. He marched along the foot of the mountains to Jammu, the Raja of which was subdued. After getting the submission of the ruler of Kashmir and raiding the Khokhar country, Timur left for his capital, appointing Sayyid Khizr Khan, the Tughlak governor of Lahore, "a man of great ability, and of nobility also," as his deputy in India in charge of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur (March, 1399). Timur has left an interesting account of Delhi as he found it; and from it we learn how Delhi had grown since the days of Prithvi Rai.

Timur's invasion left anarchy, pestilence and famine behind it and "inflicted more misery on India than had ever been before inflicted by any conqueror in a single invasion." Delhi was

**Renewed confusion in Delhi** in ruins and without any proper government for over two months. Everywhere

the social fabric had been thrown out of gear; and the insolence of military adventurers became marked. After some fighting, the Wazir Ikbāl Khan regained possession of Delhi; and he persuaded his nominal sovereign, Mahmud Tughlak, to return to the capital in 1401. The Sultan became more of a puppet than before and was allowed no hand at all in public affairs. He made a vain attempt to get the help of the Sharqi King of

**The rule of Ikbāl Khan, the Wazir** Jaunpur (Ibrahim Shah who ascended the throne in 1401). He then settled at Kanauj in the territory of Jaunpur, accompanied by a part of the army; and Ikbāl Khan made some attempts to dislodge him even from this refuge.

The death of Ikbāl at the hands of Sayyid Khizr Khan in battle, near Multan, in 1405 A.D., enabled the refugee king Mahmud to proceed to Delhi where a number of nobles supported him. Daulat Khan Lodi, an Afghan noble of

**and of Daulat Khan**

the court, loyally supported the Sultan and became his Wazir. He made gallant efforts to restore the rapidly declining power of Delhi. But things had decayed too far and the Sultan was too imbecile and too unpopular with

the army for any real improvement to be made. Sultan Mahmud died in 1413 A.D.; and "with him," as Ferishta writes, "fell the kingdom of Delhi from the race of the Turks, who had mightily swayed the sceptre for more than two centuries."

The nobles chose Daulat Khan Lodi to be their leader; but he was not recognised as king and was in reality only the head of a military oligarchy. He

struggled hard for fifteen months to reconcile the military fief-holders to his rule and subdue the Hindu chiefs of Rohilkhand. Meanwhile

Khizr Khan, Timur's deputy and the ruler of Lahore and Multan, advanced on Delhi and captured it after a siege of four months. Daulat Khan was imprisoned and Khizr Khan began a new dynasty known as the Sayyids.

The main causes of the disintegration of the Delhi empire were to be seen in the centrifugal tendencies operating in the period of the Tughlaks. The

unwieldiness and the difficulty of communication between the various parts of the empire had led to the rise of the provincial governors into independence. The entrusting of military commands and governorships into the hands of the foreign *amirs* and favourites who had no loyalty to the throne hastened this process. The convulsions of Muhammad Tughlak's reign had thrown the empire greatly out of gear. Firuz's mild rule and unwarlike character had further contributed to the diminution of royal prestige. The Sultan could not assert his authority easily; and the reigns of the successors of Firuz illustrate the weakness of royalty and the growth in power of military adventurers who could make and unmake the puppet kings of Delhi. "The theocratic character of the state (under Firuz) adversely affected its

efficiency ; and the influence of the *mullahs* and the *muftis* proved disastrous in the long run." The ruling race became accustomed to ease and sloth ; and they no more displayed military skill and discipline, nor any capacity to defend the frontier from invasion. The evils of the *jaghir* system which was revived by Firuz, the turbulence of the Mughal centurions of an earlier epoch, and of the Slave guards of a later age led to further confusion. The imbecility of the last Tughlak Sultans and the catastrophe of Timur's invasion were but the coping-stones which completed the arch of decay and disintegration. There had as yet grown no real affinity between the Hindus and the Muhammadans who still continued as "separate parts of the body-politic" ; and the former had not yet become willing participators in the building of the political edifice. The ruin of the empire was completed by the invasion of Timur whose deputy swallowed up its last remnants.

### SECTION III

#### DELHI UNDER THE SAYYID AND LODI KINGS

##### A. The Sayyids : 1414-1451 A.D.

For many years after Khizr Khan came to occupy Delhi, there was no Empire of Delhi either in reality or in name. Khizr Khan\* did not assume the title of king and affected to rule only as the deputy of Tamerlane and his son. He did not obtain any large territory along with Delhi ; and the neighbouring regions of Katehr (Rohilkhand), Mewat and Badaon were very refractory. His first task was to consolidate his position and create some semblance of order. He appointed new officials and built up a fresh administration. He looked seriously to the relief of the Muslim poor whose number had greatly

\* According to Ferishta, he was a Sayyid or descendant of the Prophet. He succeeded his father in the governorship of Multan under Firuz Shah and had wisely submitted to Timur, who made him, on his departure, the governor of Lahore. He took advantage of the confusion that prevailed in Delhi after the extinction of the Tughlak line and got possession of it. The dynasty was not supported by the Afghans or the Turks. The whole period of Sayyid rule saw no real material advance in public security or in the strength of the central government.

increased during the disorders of the recent years. His Wazir, Taju'l Mulk, raided Katehr and restored order in the regions of the Doab and Gwalior, after repeated punitive expeditions. "Nothing brings more clearly into relief the

weakness of the government of Delhi  
His work than these repeated rebellions on the part of the local zamindars and chieftains." Both minister and ruler died after a life of exhaustion, in 1421 A.D. The Wazir was the model of a loyal servant; and the ruler lived "like a true Sayyid."\*

His son, Mubarak Shah (1421-34 A.D.), had also to quell a series of rebellions, like those of the Turk-bachchas of Sirhind and the Khokhars of the northern frontier, who had been repeatedly rising and had even threatened Lahore. The Doab also raised its head in revolt often and had to be quieted, as well as Katehr and Mewat. An invasion of the ruler of Jaunpur had to be pushed back. Domestic quarrels, arising out of the ambitions of Sarwaru'l Mulk and his rival Kamalu'l Mulk, had to be stifled. Out of these, Sarwar emerged triumphant; but he sullied his name with instigating the assassination of the Sultan (1434 A.D.) whom the chronicler† describes as "a element and generous sovereign, full of excellent qualities."

\* E. Thomas, however, says that Khizr Khan was not noted for any marked activity; and Taju'l Mulk was busy either coercing or persuading the various chiefs who surrounded the reduced kingdom of Delhi (*Chronicles*, p. 327).

† Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindhi, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Mubark Shahi*, is the main source of information for the period of the Sayyids for whom he is a contemporaneous authority. Later writers like Ferishta borrowed largely from him. He was a writer of merit and a careful epitomist and a living witness of the government of his patron, Mubarak and of his predecessor. (See Thomas: *Chronicles*, p. 330, and Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 6, et seq; also K. K. Basu's the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* tr. in the *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, Vol. LXIII). The *Tabakat-i-Nasiri* of Mihaju's-Siraj brings the history of the Delhi Sultanate down to 1259 A.D. Zia Barni carries it down to 1356 A.D. Shams-i-Siraj Afif continues it for the entire reign of Firuz Tughlak (1351-88), though his treatment of the latter part of the reign is scanty. The *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* comes in about this time and takes the narrative down to the accession of the third Sayyid ruler (1134). All later writers have been indebted to the last-named work for the history of the period of confusion after Timur's invasion.

The kingdom of Delhi was, under Mubarak, less affected by the enmity of powerful rivals like Jaunpur and Malwa than by the petty zamindars of Katehr, the fief-holders of the Doab, and the Khokhars and other tribes of the Punjab. The kingdom had lost its prestige completely with Timur's invasion, even in the vicinity of the capital.

After Mubarak, his adopted son, Muhammad, was raised to the throne by the perfidious Wazir, Sarwar, who proceeded to get the administration completely into his own hands. In the crisis that followed, Sarwar was killed; and his rival, Kamalu'l-Mulk, emerged victorious. He pretended to be loyal to the king, who tried to infuse a little energy into the state, but soon subsided into a sensual life. Rebellions and disorders reappeared in the country. The powerful ruler of Jaunpur annexed several districts belonging to Delhi; while Mahmud Khilji of Malwa, who had recently usurped its throne and was a man of great ambition and ability and who had contended with the powerful Kumbha, Maharana of Mewar, was so bold as to advance upon Delhi itself. The Sayyid Sultan was panic-stricken and would have abandoned the capital had he not been boldly assisted by

**Sultan Muhammad: 1434-45 A.D.**

**Rise of Bahlul Lodi**

Bahlul Lodi, the governor of Lahore, whose family had been in possession of Sirhind and who now began to play a prominent part in Delhi affairs and prepared to resist the invader. The danger of the Malwa invasion disappeared as quickly as it came. But Bahlul Lodi, who was now the virtual master of the Punjab and had been dignified with the title of Khan-Khanan (first of the nobles), himself turned against his master and besieged Delhi. He failed, however, and had to withdraw. Thereafter the fall of the Sayyid monarchy and the triumph of Bahlul Lodi was only a question of time. Muhammad died in 1445 and was succeeded by Alau'd-din, the last of the line, who was even weaker than his predecessor.



The accession of the new king was not recognised by Buhlul who now made a second attempt on Delhi in 1447 A.D., though with no success. Soon after, the Sultan removed his capital to Badaun, where he hoped for more security. He alienated his Wazir, Hamid Khan, who actually invited Buhlul Lodi to take Delhi and its crown. Buhlul assumed the title of Sultan on taking possession of the capital; and the Sayyid refugee voluntarily resigned to him the whole kingdom except his district of Badaun. Thus was the dynasty of the Sayyids extinguished and the Afghan line of the Lodis set up. At the time of their extinction, the rule of the Sayyids extended only over the city of Delhi and the neighbouring villages. Multan, Sambhal, Mewat and Gwalior were all under independent chiefs, most of whom were partisans of Buhlul who thus ascended the Delhi throne, not merely as the designated heir of the last Sayyid Sultan, but as the mouth-piece of a victorious faction of nobles.\*

Alau'd-din  
1445-51 A.D.

End of the  
Sayyids:  
1451 A.D.

### B. The Lodis: 1451-1526 A.D.

The vigorous rule of Buhlul Lodi is a contrast to the weakness of his predecessors. He was a powerful ruler even before his elevation to the throne and possessed the greater part of the Punjab. His long reign of nearly thirty-eight years was marked by his energetic and successful subjugation of the local chiefs and by a prolonged and bitter struggle with the kings of Jaunpur ending with its

\* Buhlul Lodi was raised to the throne by a confederacy of six or seven great Afghan chiefs. At the period when this confederacy was formed, the empire of Delhi had really ceased to exist, having been broken down into a variety of kingdoms and principalities. Of all the former vast empire, Delhi alone with a small territory round it, was held by Syud Sultan Alau'd-din, the nominal sovereign. The more considerable provinces, Multan, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, had each its separate king. The provinces around Delhi were in the condition emphatically called *Muluk-i-Tawaif*, or government of tribes—Mahroli and Mewat : ..Sambhal.....Kol-Jaleswar, Rapri, Kampila and Patiali Biana-Bahlul himself possessed the extensive provinces of Lahore, Dipalpur and Sirhind as far south as Paniput,—Erskine: *History of India under Babar and Humayun* (1854), Vol. I, p. 405 and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 227.

State of Delhi at  
the accession of  
the Lodis

annexation. He restored to some extent the prestige of Delhi and the power of Islam as against the Hindu-Rajput revival under the lead of Mewar. He was a man of good character and led a simple life.\* He was kind to the poor and administered strict justice. But in the midst of wars, he could not reorganise the administration.

The Lodi clan, in common with other Afghans, was imbued with a democratic spirit. Buhlul looked upon himself only as the chief of a number of equal clan-chiefs and fraternised with them freely. This was good enough when the ruler had a strong personality, but would break down under less resolute and more pliant rulers. Buhlul illustrated the advantages of such a system. Under his successor, Ibrahim, whose arrogance and isolation offended and alienated the Afghan nobles, the system completely broke down. The very succession to the throne was settled by the nobles. The Lodi rule is regarded as the first period of Afghan rule, the second being that of the Sur Dynasty of Sher Shah.

Buhlul drove back an invasion of Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur who had advanced to Delhi. This victory strengthened the Sultan's position over the fief-holders and enabled him to make an impression upon the Rajputs and gain control over Multan and Sind. The war with Jaunpūr was renewed again and again. Its new king, Hussian Shah, (1458-1479 A.D.), had to give way after a prolonged struggle. Buhlul took possession of Jaunpur in 1479, and placed it in charge of a *junta* of Afghan nobles. An attempt of the expelled Hussain to recover his lost kingdom failed. Buhlul then put Jaunpur in charge of his son, Barbak Shah and extended his authority over Kalpi, Dholpur and Gwalior.

\* It is said of him that he did not care for pomp and ceremony saying that "it was enough for him the world knew he was king without his making a vain parade of royalty."

Buhlul was succeeded by his son, Nizam Khan, who took the title of Sultan Sikandar, with the support of the amirs and the nobles, in preference to the claims of Barbak Shah. The new Sultan Sikandar: 1489-1517 A.D.

Sultan vigorously set himself to the task of suppressing the turbulent feudatories, put down the resistance of his brother in Jaunpur, drove away Hussain Shah Sharqi who made one last attempt to regain his lost kingdom, and extended the power of Delhi over Benares and Bihar (1495 A.D.). He made a treaty with the ruler of Bengal, and thus secured his eastern frontier from danger. But the effective subjugation of the turbulent Afghan feudatories was too much even for this strong ruler. He chose the town of Agra as his residence, so that he might exercise a more effective control over the chiefs of its unruly neighbourhood (1504 A.D.), especially of Etawah and Gwalior; and Agra was henceforth to compete with Delhi as the metropolis of Hindustan. Agra thus first came into political importance, it had been hitherto a mere dependency of the important fort of Bayana. The rest of Sikandar's reign was occupied with campaigns against rebels and the Hindus of Narwar and Chanderi. He died in 1517 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Ibrahim Lodi.

Sikandar was, according to his own light, a just and upright ruler, generous to the poor, but exercised strict control over the amirs and centralised all authority in his own hands. He encouraged agriculture and trade and checked corruption and embezzlement of public money. But he was very bigoted towards the Hindus and persevered in the destruction of their temples, entirely ruining the shrines of Muttra.\* He closely associated with the *mullahs* and *maulvis*, held religious discussions and gave a theocratic character to government. He was a patron of learning and himself wrote verses in Persian. He maintained order by

His strong rule

\* Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV (*The Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 447). This history begins with the Lodis and gives many stories and anecdotes of the intelligence and skill of Sikandar Lodi, who was credited with supernatural powers.

his firm rule and held the nobles in check by his vigour. He was easily the best of the House of Lodi and completed the edifice of empire which was left unfinished by his father.

Ibrahim Lodi, his successor, disgusted the nobles by his arrogance from the very beginning of his rule. Under him the system of Lodi rule broke down.

**Ibrahim Lodi:** Many of the Lodi, Lohani and Fermuli  
**1517-26 A.D.** clans who held important offices, now became ungovernable; and in this situation the enlarged kingdom which stretched to Bengal on the east and to Bundelkhand on the south-east, could not be held together. Ibrahim's cruelty and harshness towards the half-loyal nobility hastened the disruption\* of the state.

The first rebellion of the nobles placed the Sultan's brother, Jalal, on the throne of Jaunpur. The latter took advantage of his position, determined upon securing himself, took the title of Sultan and got the assistance of Azim Humayun, who was the governor of Kalanjar. He was, however, deserted by his supporters and forced to flee to Gwalior. Captured ultimately, he was put to death. Ibrahim was soured by this revolt and became very capricious and haughty. He disgraced Azim Humayun; and this act alarmed the other nobles, and led to numerous revolts. Darya Khan, the governor of Bihar, openly raised the standard of revolt. His son, Muhammad who succeeded him openly proclaimed his independence and had coins struck in his own name. An army which was sent against Maharana Sanga of Mewar failed to hold its own; and several captains deserted to the enemy Daulat Khan Lodi, the powerful governor of the Punjab, whose son was cruelly treated by the Sultan, invited the Mughal ruler of Kabul, Babar, to invade the country.

Babar, who had already strengthened his dominion in Kabul and secured his northern frontier against the Uzbeks and controlled the hill-tribes of the frontier, was very glad

\* The disruption would have come sooner or later, for "even if Ibrahim had kept the nobles attached to himself, they would have tried to set up small principalities for themselves and reduced him to the position of a titular king, a mere figure—head in the midst of warring factions and cliques," (Ishwari Prasad, p. 487).

to comply with the request. He had, even before now, raided the border country. In 1524, he  
**Babar's first invasion: 1524** advanced upon Lahore with the professed object of placing Alam Khan, an uncle of Ibrahim, who had fled to him for protection, on the Indian throne. He took possession of Lahore and returned back to Kabul. Daulat Khan, who had his own plans of making himself independent in the Punjab, turned against Babar's lieutenants, and overran the greater part of the province. Alam Khan fled to Kabul and Babar sent him with an army to India, being himself then engaged against the Uzbeks. Both Alam Khan and Daulat Khan who now joined him were defeated under the walls of Delhi by Ibrahim (1525).

Meanwhile Babar had disposed of the Uzbeks and reached Lahore. He pursued the traitor, Daulat Khan, into the hills and secured his submission.  
**His second invasion—victory of Panipat: April, 1526** Then he proceeded along the foot of the hills to the Sutlej and advanced by the direct road to Delhi, determined to crush the Afghan power.\* At Panipat his tactics—like the linking of his guns together, the protecting of the infantry by breast-works and the outflanking attacks of his wings—gained him the decisive victory (April 21, 1526). Ibrahim was slain; and Delhi and Agra were occupied by the invader who thus became the founder of the mighty Mughal House,

\* Babar fought Panipat, "primarily because he conceived the Punjab to belong to him by right (of descent from Timur); next because he was convinced that the permanent occupation of the Punjab entailed the conquest of Hindustan; finally, because the political situation seemed to offer the prospect of hard fighting and hazardous adventure, such as his soul loved." L. F. Rushbrook Williams: *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 124.

## CHAPTER VI

### LOCAL MUHAMMADAN DYNASTIES OF NORTHERN INDIA

#### Introduction

The Empire of Delhi, in its widest extent, in the beginning of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak, extended from the Himalayas to the Coromandel Coast and from the Indus on the north-west to East Bengal. On the south it might be regarded as having included the whole of the Peninsula "except a long narrow tract on the south-west, the frontier of which would be imperfectly marked by a line drawn from Bombay to Rameshwar." Even within these limits, Orissa was unsubdued; it extended from the mouth of the Hughli to that of the Godavari. Another region had been but imperfectly conquered and it included Rajputana and the hilly core of Central India. The disorders which were chronic in the reign of this ruler produced two large defections in the south, comparatively early in the reign. These were Telingana which recovered its power, and Vijayanagar which set itself up, to a large extent, in the place of the Hoysalas; and the result was that the Mussalman frontier was confined to the Krishna on the south, and to the meridian of Hyderabad on the east. The authority of Delhi was soon banished from the Deccan by the grand rebellion of the amirs which resulted in the formation of the Bahmani kingdom. Shortly before this dismemberment took place, Bengal had set up its independence. The accession of Firuz Shah Tughlak put an end to this rapid process of disintegration for the time being. Imperial authority was able to re-establish itself in Gujarat and Sind; and though Bengal was not brought back to allegiance, the Sultan made a raid into Orissa as far as Jajnagar. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, during the minority of the last Tughlak ruler, Gujarat and Jaunpur proclaimed their independence.

The invasion of Timur still further weakened the fabric of the empire from which even Malwa and Khandesh seceded. The Doab, Rohilkhand (Katehr) and the Punjab still remained as appanages to Delhi. But their feudal nobles were turbulent and factious; and as we saw, the strength of the Sayyid rulers was spent out in a futile struggle to keep these under control. Jaunpur and Bihar were indeed recovered, but only with difficulty, under the Lodis.

Except in Rajputana and in South India, the decline of the Delhi Sultanate did not affect the ascendancy of the Muhammadans. The dynasties that rose up were only independent Muhammadan kingdoms; and the rise of these "meant only the further consolidation of the Muhammadan power in India." The

authority of Delhi varied in extent from dynasty to dynasty, even from ruler to ruler in many cases. It had no effective control over the region to the west of the Indus. Kashmir was similarly free from its hold; and general inaccessibility kept the tracts of Rajputana, Gondwana and the bulk of Central India and Assam free from the supremacy of Delhi. Generally speaking, the Sultanate of Delhi normally held sway over "the Punjab, the valleys of the Indus and of the Jumna and the Ganga as far as Lakhnauti and also the fertile province of Oudh, with various strongholds such as Ajmer, Bayana, Ranthambhar, Gwalior and Kalinjar to the west." This, however, did not mean that the Hindu power was diminished. In the sub-Himalayan regions, except Kashmir which came under Muham-

madan rule about 1340 A.D., the other regions like Kangra, Nepal and Bhutan remained independent. But a wide

tract at the foot of the Himalayas, including a good part of Rohilkhand and the sub-montane parts of Oudh were not conquered. Stretching from Marwar and the desert tract to the west of the Aravallis, east right across Central India through the forest-region of Gondwana to the imperfectly subdued Orissa on the coast, was a belt of Hindu states,

Rajput and aboriginal, forming what may be called "the central zone" of Hindu independence, as distinguished from the Himalayan hill-states which formed the northern zone and the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar and Warangal which formed the southern belt. Warangal, weakened considerably after Pratapa Rudra II, declined rapidly in the fourteenth century and was absorbed by the Bahmani state in 1423. The Gajapatis of Orissa were a standing menace to it on the north. The central zone was saved from Muhammadan conquest "partly by the valour of its people (Rajput and aboriginal tribes) and partly by its thick and dense forests which the invading armies of the north found it extremely difficult to penetrate." The northern

Interaction between the Hindu and the Mussalman states and Bengal were engaged in a more or less continuous conflict with the Hindu states of Rajputana and Central India and Orissa, at whose expense they wanted to advance. And the central group of Muhammadan states, Gujarat, Khandesh and Malwa, was pressed by, and in return pressed on the Hindus of Rajputana and Central India. There was also a never-ending interaction between these Muslim states and the Bahmani and its branch Sultanates of the Deccan; and also the Vijayanagar-Bahmani struggle went on unceasingly, though intermittently, being mainly waged in the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab of Raichur. These struggles gave sufficient variety and interest to the political forces which generated them; but they lost all their importance when all these fragments of Mussalman dominion came to be gradually merged in the Mughal Empire under Akbar and his descendants.

### Bengal

Almost from its conquest by Muhammad Bhaktiyar Khilji, Bengal had been in reality a separate kingdom; and its acknowledgment of Delhi sovereignty was neither real nor continuous. Bhaktiyar Khilji had, before his death in 1205 A.D., advanced as far east as Nuddea and north as far as Cooch-Bihar. He established himself at the old Hindu capital of Lakhnauti (Gaur), situated on the left



bank of the Ganges in the Malda District. Bhaktiyar Khilji's rule extended over Mithila (Bihar), Varendra and a portion of the Delta. The Muhammadan province and kingdom of Bengal was long confined only to these regions, but was subsequently extended, into Chota Nagpur and the region east of the Brahmaputra. Under his successors Mussalman dominion was extended, until in 1225-26, the Slave Sultan Altamish conquered Bihar and sent his second son to Bengal where he killed the rebel governor and began to rule from Lakhnauti. Several governors subject to Delhi followed one another, One of them rose against Delhi in 1253, but had to submit.

**Bengal under Muhammadan rule** Tughril Khan who became the governor in 1277, had been a slave of Balban. He declared himself independent in 1279 and twice defeated the Delhi forces. Balban pursued him to Jainagar and Sonargaon in East Bengal and relentlessly destroyed him (1282). The next five governors were members of the House of Balban and ruled till 1331. Bughra Khan, Balban's second son, was the first of these, being appointed by his father; and he "preferred obscure independence in Bengal to a laborious struggle for the Delhi throne, his right by inheritance."\*

**Tughril's rebellion: 1279-82**

**The House of Bughra Khan: 1282-1331**

Ghiyasu'd-din Tughlak's campaigns in Bengal were consequent on a civil war that rose after the death of the second son of Bughra Khan, and secured a reassertion of Delhi authority over the province. Muslim rule had by this time been extended into East Bengal and to Sonargaon (Swarnagrama) in the present district of Dacca.

Within its own borders Bengal was often divided against itself. About 1297 the province came to be split into two parts; and rival kings ruled from the rival cities of Sonargaon and Lakhnauti. This division continued to exist till 1352 through the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak. About 1338 the governor of Sonargaon declared himself

\* Wm. Irvine in *The Imperial Gazetteer* (New Edition), Vol. II, p. 372.

independent under the title of Fakhru'd-din Mubarak Shah. He was defeated and killed by an officer of the rival governor of Lakhnauti who claimed to be king himself. The latter was soon afterwards assassinated and superseded by his foster-brother, Ilyas Shah. Ilyas Shah had long been striving for the crown of Lakhnauti and assumed the royal title in 1345. He finally obtained hold of Sonargaon in 1352 and is said to have invaded Jajnagar in Orissa and Tirhut in North Bihar. The capital had now been shifted to Pandua from Lakhnauti, probably because it was within striking distance of the rival capital, Sonargaon. Firuz Tughlak's expedition against Ilyas Shah was not fruitful; and the independence of Bengal was formally recognised by the Delhi Sultan in 1356. Shortly after this event, Ilyas Shah died.

Ilyas Shah's successors ruled Bengal till 1407. His son, Sikandar Shah (1357-93 A.D.), had to meet another invasion of Bengal by Firuz Tughlak, but contrived to get favourable terms from the invader. He erected some stately buildings at Pandua, but had to allow

his rebel son, Azam, to remain as the practically independent ruler of Sonargaon. Azam succeeded him for a year and was a noted patron of literature. As noted above, in 1407, the dynasty of Ilyas was superseded by a line of Hindu princes founded by Raja Kans who, according to all accounts, was a Hindu bigot and ruled from 1407 to 1414, though without full royal titles. His son and grandson turned converts to Islam and were probably responsible for the large-scale conversion of the people of East Bengal which is even now marked by a Muslim majority. The line was expelled in its own turn by a descendant of Ilyas Shah. A line of Abyssinian Slaves (Habshis) ruled for a few years; and in 1493 the throne passed to a family of Arab Sayyids, the first of whom, Husain Shah (1493-1518 A.D.), attained to great glory and power.

Later Dynasties He bravely resisted the aggressions of Sikandar Lodi of Delhi and made a campaign in Assam.

His grandson was conquered in 1538 by the Mughal Emperor, Humayun who lost Bengal soon afterwards to the famous Afghan ruler, Sher Khan Sur. The latter proclaimed himself king of Bengal and Bihar in 1539. After the Sur Dynasty occupied the Delhi throne, Bengal was placed under their dependent relatives. In 1563, Sulaiman Khan, the Suri governor of Bihar, proclaimed himself the independent ruler of Bengal. After his death in 1572, a civil war ensued, in the course of which the Emperor Akbar was invited to conquer the kingdom. The province was formally annexed to Delhi after two campaigns (1575-76 A.D.), but was not fully subdued till many years afterwards. Orissa\* was also conquered by Akbar.

The continued independence of Bengal is explained by the weakness of the Delhi kingdom and the interposition of the buffer-state of Jaunpur. The annals of the Bengal Sultans are mostly filled with wars; but some of them sympathised with their Hindu subjects, while others were enlightened patrons of literature. Nasrat Shah, son of Husain Shah, caused the *Mahabharata* to be translated from Samskrit into Bengali. Husain Shah himself is mentioned in Bengali literature with affection and respect.

The Portuguese appeared in Bengal in the reign of Nasrat Shah, in 1528; and their misconduct in Chittagong led to reprisals in the course of which they burnt the port.

### Jaunpur

Khwaja Jahan, the minister of the last of the Tughlaks, deserted his powerless master and founded an independent dynasty at Jaunpur, a city built by Firuz Tughlak on the

\* Orissa's history is dark for some centuries after Kharavela. Yayati Kesari expelled the Yavana rulers in 474 A.D.; and his successors, known as the Kesari Dynasty, ruled down to 1132 A.D., with their capital at Jajpur. Orissa The Eastern Gangas said to be of South Indian origin, succeeded and ruled till about the middle of the fifteenth century. Then followed the Surya Dynasty of which Pratapa Rudra Gajapati (1504-32) was very important. The latter's minister usurped the throne; his example was followed by his own minister, who, in turn, was conquered by Daud Khan of Bengal. The Afghan rule in Orissa was finally destroyed only about 1600 A.D.

banks of the Gumti, in honour of his cousin and predecessor, Muhammad bin Tughlak. Khwaja Jahan received from the Tughlaks the title of Maliku's-Sharq (Lord of the East) and soon became so powerful that he is said to have received tribute from the rulers of Lakhnauti and Jajnagar. Ibrahim Shah Sharqi (1402-1436 A.D.), was a ruler of considerable talents; he took Kanauj from Delhi, built up an efficient system of administration, encouraged art and architecture, invited many learned men to his court and made Jaunpur a famous centre of Muslim learning in the East.\* Ibrahim threatened Delhi itself about 1427, and fought with the ruler of Malwa for the possession of Kalpi on the Jumna.

Ibrahim's son, Mahmud, continued the contest with the Malwa ruler, threatened Delhi in 1452, captured Chunar near Benares and even invaded Orissa. The last king, Hussain Shah (1459-76 A.D.), invaded Orissa, compelled the ruler of Gwalior to pay tribute and in 1473 actually attacked Delhi and occupied its suburbs. He was defeated by, and had to retire before, Bahlul Lodi. He repeated the attempt in the following year, but got no better result. The Delhi troops under Bahlul Lodi then advanced and took Jaunpur. Hussain Shah was expelled; and the kingdom was put in charge of a son of Bahlul Lodi. The new ruler of Jaunpur intrigued with the expelled Hussain and revolted against his brother, Sikandar Lodi, Sultan of Delhi, and was defeated in 1493. The Sharqi kingdom was extinguished; and Hussain Shah ended his days as a refugee in Bengal. There was a short-lived attempt made by Sikandar Lodi to revive this kingdom as an appanage for his second son, Jalal Khan. "The perturbed state of the rest of India gave to this short-lived (Sharqi) dynasty a greater prominence than its power would otherwise have

\* Ibrahim is called by one writer "this Medici of the East." He finished the famous Atala Mosque which indicates his fine architectural tastes. (*Vide Fuhrer: The Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur: and Mummud Fasihud-din: The Kings of the East* (p. 45).

conferred upon it. The Shargi capital was the resort of many learned men, and the fine buildings there erected survive, an object of our admiration, to the present day."\* Jaunpur was famous for its beautiful buildings as well as for its learned men; it earned and deserved its title of "the Shiraz of India." Its mosques have a peculiar character.

### Kashmir

Kashmir remained for long inaccessible to the invasions of the Muham/nadans, but was consumed by internal discord and civil strife which

**Kashmir**

became particularly marked after the death of Jayasimha (1128-1155) who was a very strong ruler. For nearly two centuries from his death, the kingdom produced no ruler strong or skilful enough to consolidate the government; "if the valley escaped being annexed by the Muhammadan rulers of India, it was due to its natural isolation and the physical difficulties its conquest offered, rather than to its military strength and abundance of resources."† The ruler of Kandahar invaded the valley and

**Shah Mir ascends its throne: 1337-38 A.D.**

returned with a large booty, early in the fourteenth century. A Persian adventurer, Shah Mir, took advantage of this confusion, destroyed the last representatives of Hindu rule and became the ruler of the country in 1337-38 A.D. Under him and his successors, Islam gradually spread; and a majority of the population were converted to the new faith. Hindu images were replaced by those of Muslim saints in the same old places of worship; but the people retained their old manners, customs and even superstitions. The rulers were largely tolerant of the religious prejudices of their subjects. Shah Mir used his power wisely and beneficently, removed many arbitrary and vexatious imposts and fixed the land-revenue at one-sixth of the produce. Twelve of Shah Mir's descendants ruled the kingdom. The most celebrated of these were Sikandar, the Idol-Breaker (1386-1410 A.D.), and

\* W. Irvine in the *Imperial Gazetteer* (New Edition), Vol. II, p. 875.

† R. C. Kak: *An Outline of the History of Kashmir* (in *A Guide to Kashmir Monuments*).

Zainu'l Abidin (1421 A.D. *acc.*) Sikandar greatly promoted conversions to Islam, and by a timely submission to Timur saved the country from the latter. Sikandar and his equally bigoted minister destroyed most of the famous Hindu temples and forcibly converted many Brahmans of the land. To-day there are only a little over 500 Hindus to every 10,000 of the population in the land. Zainu'l Abidin may be regarded as "the Abkar of Kashmir."

**Zainu'l Abidin:**  
1421-72 A.D. He had a long and prosperous reign and ruled till 1472 A.D. He was tolerant of the Hindus, had a number of Sanskrit works, like the *Mahabharata* and the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, translated into Persian, maintained a magnificent court, renovated the irrigation channels which had gone out of use and gave a strong impetus to the manufacture of shawls, paper and embroidered tapestry. He was the '*Bad Shah*,' the Great King, *par excellence*, of Kashmir.

On account of confusion that prevailed in the land for the next half a century, Mirza Haidar Doghlat a cousin of the Mughal Emperor Babar, invaded Kashmir, conquered it and ruled over it, nominally on behalf of the Emperor Humayun, till 1551. After him the old dynasty was restored, but it was quickly superseded by a Chakk (Tsak) leader, Ghazi Shah, whose line ruled the land for nearly thirty years. Owing to internal dissensions, their hold was greatly weakened; and the land was finally occupied by the Mughals (1586 A.D.). The ruler abdicated and was enrolled among the nobles of Akbar's court. Akbar made a journey to the Vale of Kashmir, soon after its acquisition. He twice repeated his visit. The valley became the favourite summer resort of his successors and still maintains "its celebrity as the most delicious spot in Asia, or in the world."

### Sind and Multan

The province of Sind was seldom under the authority of Delhi. It was for long under rulers who claimed to represent the Caliphs, but had contrived to become hereditary. In 1010 it was conquered by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna and remained under the authority of his dynasty till 1053,

**The Sumras of Sind**

when the Sumras,\* a local Rajput clan, gained power ; and they contrived to rule over Lower Sind for nearly 300 years (1050-1351 A.D.). They became converts to Islam. Their power was neither extensive nor absolute and they were subject to periodical invasions from Delhi and incursions by the Mughals. Nasiru'd-din Kubaicha overran Multan and Uchch and established his supremacy over the Sumra chiefs. Muhammad bin Tughlak and his successor asserted

their authority over the province ; and  
**The Sammahs** Firuz Tughlak got a victory over the Jam of Thatta. About 1351 the Sumras were superseded by another local tribe, the Sammahs, whose founder claimed descent from Jamshid and was known as the Jam, and who ruled from Thatta. The Sammahs were probably also of

Rajput origin; and like the Sumras, they  
**Later Rulers** also were quickly converted to Islam. They were extinguished by the rise of the Arghuns, a family of adventurers descended from the great Chinghiz Khan, who extended their power into the province from their base in Kandahar. They were soon driven from Kandahar by Babar, the founder of the Mughal Empire, and

were confined to Sind. Humayun spent  
**The Mughals** some time in Sind, in the course of his  
**absorb Sind :** wanderings. The Arghuns were followed  
**1591-92 A.D.** in 1544 by another branch of the same family which had the title of Tarkhan. These Tarkhans continued to rule the province until it was annexed to the Mughal Empire by Akbar in 1592 A.D.

Multan had been attached to the Delhi empire ever since Altamish defeated Kubaicha down to the invasion of  
**Multan** Tamerlane. It broke away completely from Delhi in the time of the Sayyids and came under the rule of an Arab Shaik family, the Langhas. The last of the line was overthrown by Shah Hussain Arghun of Sind in 1525. Multan came to be reunited to Delhi under Humayun.

\* For a full account, see Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I (Appendix), pp. 483, *et seq.*

## Gujarat

The fertile and wealthy kingdom of Gujarat\* was for long free from subjection to Muhammadan rule owing to its

Gujarat "inaccessible position beyond the great desert and the hills connecting the Vin-  
dhyas with the Aravalli ranges, which rendered it difficult to invade it except by sea." It was only in 1297 that it was permanently annexed to the Sultanate of Delhi; and the governors of that province were not uniformly loyal to their masters. At the end of the fourteenth century the province became independent again, but under Muslim rule. Zafar Khan, its governor, who was the son of a Rajput con-

vert and was appointed to his post in 1391, assumed independence five years later, with the title of Muzaffar Shah.†

At first his power was very limited; he was surrounded by hostile elements, Rajput rajas and wild Bhil tribes, and possessed but a narrow territory between the hills and the sea. He was, however, a very vigorous ruler and extended his authority to Diu and Jhalawar; and he was even in possession of Malwa for a time in 1407. He was succeeded by his grandson, Ahmad Shah, who was the real founder of Gujarat's greatness. He built the city of Ahmadabad, which became the capital of the kingdom and,

Ahmad Shah:  
1411-42 A.D.

afterwards, of the governors of the Mughal province and is full of the relics of both the independent Moslem and later Mughal rule, particularly of the beautiful Gujarat architecture.‡ The reign of Ahmad Shah was very prosperous; he beautified Ahmadabad with many fine buildings, continued his grand-father's aggressions of Malwa and the work of subjugating the Kathiawar Peninsula and waged wars, besides, with the Sultans of Khandesh and the Bahmani kingdom. Ahmad Shah was a bigoted Mussalman, but he

\* For its extent and prosperity, see Smith: *Oxford History of India* (1919); pp. 267-68. The latest account of Gujarat is the *History of Gujarat* by M. S. Commissariat (1940) which begins from 1297.

† The date of his assumption of independence is given also as 1401 A.D. and 1403-4 A.D.

‡ Burgess: *Muhammadan Architecture of Gujarat; Muhammadan Architecture of Ahmadabad* (A. S. W. I.)



maintained good order in his own kingdom, dispensing even  
 Muhammad and impartial justice. The next impor-  
 Shah Bigarah : tant king was Muhammad Shah Bigarah\*  
 (1458-1511 A. D.) (1458-1511 A.D.), a grandson of Ahmad  
 Shah, who was the greatest ruler of the dynasty. He carried  
 on the traditional wars with Khandesh and Malwa, reduced  
 the hill-fortresses of Champanir and Girnar in Kathiawar,  
 overran Cutch and even penetrated to  
 His achievements the delta of the Indus, the Baluchi  
 tribes of which he subjugated. He kept a large fleet to  
 subdue the pirates of the islands and of Dwaraka. He also  
 attacked, towards the end of the reign, the Portuguese who  
 had become a formidable power on the west coast. He  
 allied himself with the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and made  
 a bold attack on the Portuguese fleet in order to recover  
 the trade that had passed into the latter's hands. His  
 victory of 1508 was, however, followed by a greater Portu-  
 guese triumph of Diu, a few months later, which gave  
 them the undisputed command over the whole trade  
 of the coast and which was won over the combined navies  
 of Gujarat and Egypt.†

Muhammad Shah Bigarah had an extraordinary per-  
 sonality ; and he is said to have had such long moustaches  
 that he had to tie them over his head ;  
 His personality he ate an enormous quantity of food and  
 meat and was immune against poison. Tales of his personal  
 peculiarities spread even to Europe ; and he is said to be  
 " the original of Samuel Butler's Prince ' whose daily food  
 is asp, and basilisk and toad ' . " According to the chronicler,  
 he was the best of all the kings of Gujarat, " whether for  
 abounding justice and generosity, for success in religious  
 war and for the diffusion of the laws of Islam and of  
 Mussalmans ; for soundness of judgment, alike in boyhood

\* The true interpretation of his nickname—Bigarha—is said to be " two forts," having reference to his capture of the two great Hindu forts of Champanir and Girnar.

† The Sultan is said to have employed Venetian craftsmen in the construction of his fleet of galleys at Cambay. The Portuguese and Muhammadan historians give different accounts of the first struggle ; but there was no doubt that the Portuguese received a check then. In 1510 the Sultan offered to Albuquerque, the Portuguese Governor of Goa, the fort of Diu.

(he came to the throne at the age of fourteen), in manhood and in old age; for power, for valour and for victory.”\*

Bigarah's son, Muzaffar Shah II (1511-26 A.D.), tried hard to protect the Mussalman king of Malwa against the overweening power of the Rana of Mewar, Sangram Singh, who even threatened an invasion of Gujarat. After two short and troubled reigns, came Bahadur Shah who was a brave prince and fully maintained the warlike traditions of his race. He first interfered in the disorganised affairs of the Bahmani Sultans (there were now five independent rulers who divided among them the old Bahmani kingdom) and asserted his supremacy over Khandesh and Berar. He

next marched into Malwa, laid siege to Bahadur Shah : Mandu (its capital), captured it and other 1526-37 A. D. strong forts like Raisin, Bhilsa and Chanderi (1531-32 A.D.). Malwa was annexed to Gujarat. His garrison in the port of Diu successfully repulsed an attack of the Portuguese. He stormed Chitor, the capital of Mewar, in 1534; but Humayun who had been offended with him, came to the rescue of the Rajputs, drove him back into Malwa and thence to Champanir, to Cambay and finally to Diu. The Mughal Emperor made himself master of Gujarat; but fortunately for Bahadur Shah, he was recalled to Agra by the news of Sher Khan's rebellion in Bengal. Bahadur Shah quickly recovered his power and drove away the Mughal officials (1535). Shortly afterwards he quarrelled with the Portuguese on account of their encroachments on Diu and was killed in a scuffle (1537 A.D.). Bahadur Shah was a great ruler, noted alike for his conquests and liberality. He should be reckoned as the last of the effective rulers of Gujarat.

After his death, Gujarat rapidly declined in power; but for nearly forty years the kingdom lived on under weak kings and in the midst of civil war and confusion. In 1572 Akbar occupied the country; the last king abdicated and Later rulers and absorption by Akbar : 1572-92 A.D. Mughal rule was established at Ahmabad. But the dethroned king rebelled in 1583; and

\* E. C. Bayley : *Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat*, p. 181; *Mirat-i-Sikandari*.

though he was put down quickly, the Mughals could not effectively occupy the province without some punitive campaigns which lasted on till 1592-93 A.D., when the refugee-king died.

### Malwa

The central plateau north of the Narmada is a very fertile tract and in popular belief immune from famine. It is Malwa proper. It was long under the Paramara Rajputs who ruled from Dhara. Altamish raided the country and demolished the temples of Ujjayini. But it was only under

Alau'd-din that Muhammadan rule was firmly established in the land (*cir.* 1305 A.D.) and the local Rai slain. Shortly before 1389, one Dilawar Khan Ghuri became its governor; he proclaimed his independence in

1401, in the confusion caused by Timur's invasion. He fixed his capital at the Hindu town of Dhara. His famous son, Hushang Shah (1405-34 A.D.), founded the town of Hushangabad on the Narmada and transferred his capital to Mandu which he beautified with many buildings. He waged several wars with the Sultan of Gujarat with whom he was at last forced to come to terms. He imposed tribute on Berar and led an expedition even to Jajnagar in Orissa. He was also involved in wars with Jaunpur in the north and with the Bahmani kingdom in the south. Out of all these struggles he escaped uninjured, though he had several reverses. On his death in 1435 A.D., he was followed by a debauchee son who alienated by his cruelty the minister, Muhammad Khilji.\*

The rule of the Ghuris: 1401-35 A.D.

The Dynasty of the Khiljis: 1439-1531 A.D.

The latter caused his master to be poisoned and then himself reigned for 33 years (1436-69 A.D.). He was a bigoted monarch and good soldier. He was the most famous of the Muslim rulers of Malwa; and the kingdom rose to its greatest extent in his reign. As usual, he had to fight with the neighbouring ruler of Gujarat (which helped the dispossessed Ghuri family), Jaunpur and the Deccan, as well

\* Muhammad Khilji is highly praised by Ferishta for his greatness and goodness. Ishwari Prasad compares him with Charles XII of Sweden for his valour (p. 819).

as with the Rajputs of Mewar. His successor, Ghiyasu'd-din, reigned peacefully for 32 years till 1501. Then there was the short and troubled reign of his son, Nasiru'd-din, who was suspected of having poisoned his father and who died in the midst of a civil war. Mahmud Khilji (1511-31 A.D.), the next ruler, was able, with the help of Medini Rai, a clever Hindu officer, to establish himself permanently. But the Rajput soldiery of Medini Rai who were called in to put down the turbulent Muslim oligarchy, became too dominant; and Mahmud had to call in the aid of the Sultan of Gujarat in order to expel Medini Rai. He was worsted in battle by the famous Sangram Singh of

**Conquest of  
Malwa by Baha-  
dur Shah and  
Humayun :  
1531-35 A.D.**

Mewar. He interfered in a succession dispute in Gujarat, whose successful ruler, Bahadur Shah, declared war on him, took Mandu, annexed Malwa, imprisoned Mahmud and his family and deported them to the fortress of Cham-

panir (1531 A.D.). Malwa thus became a part of the Gujarat kingdom; a few years later, it was conquered by Humayun in the course of his invasion of Gujarat (in 1535) when he expelled Bahadur Shah from Mandu. In the following year its Mughal governor attempted independence.

When the Delhi Empire passed into the hands of Sher Khan Sur, he put down the turbulent elements and divided

**Baz Bahadur and  
final conquest by  
Akbar : 1562**

the country into two parts, entrusting them to two of his capable lieutenants. Shuja Khan, the governor of Mandu, was left practically independent till his

death in 1555, when he was followed by his son, Baz Bahadur (Miyan Bayazid).<sup>\*</sup> In 1561, Akbar's generals, (his foster-brother, Adham Khan, and Pir Muhammad) reduced the country with great acts of cruelty, and from that time Malwa was a *subah* of the Mughal Empire, its possession being necessary for the subjugation of the Rajput states.

<sup>\*</sup> Baz Bahadur was the devoted lover of the beautiful and accomplished Rupmati, the princess of Sarangpur. The story of their love is the subject of folk-lore and ballads. Rupmati committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of the cruel Adham Khan who desired to possess her. Baz Bahadur was an accomplished musician and composer of Hindi songs.

### Khandesh

Khandesh was the second Muhammadan state to establish its independence south of the Narmada. It comprised the valley of the Tapti and extended to Berar on the east. It adjoins Southern Malwa and forms the ancient country of Haihaya and Anupadesa. Its ancient capital was Mahishmati (Maheswar) on the Narmada.

#### Khandesh

Firuz Tughlak entrusted the province to a personal follower of his, Malik Raji Faruqi, who claimed Arab descent (1370). Malik Raji had practically established his independence before his death in 1399. His son, Nasir Khan, greatly extended his dominion,

#### The Faruqi Dynasty

secured the strong hill-fort of Asirgarh from its Hindu Ahir ruler, founded Burhanpur on the Tapti and made it his capital. He also contrived to come out successful from his struggles with the Gujarat and Bahmani Sultans and left a prosperous kingdom to his successors. Adil Khan II (1457—1503 A.D.) struggled hard to throw off the yoke of Gujarat. After 1510, the kingdom fell into disorder from which it

#### Subjection to Gujarat

was rescued by the strong hand of Muhammad Bigarah of Gujarat. "Protected by and allied to the Gujarat kings, the Faruqi house continued to take its full share in all the wars and disputes of the surrounding states." In 1572, the inevitable process of Mughal invasions began. In 1595, Raja Ali, the ruler, sided Akbar's son, Murad, who was then engaged in an attack on Ahmadnagar. His son Bahadur who

#### Final conquest by Akbar : 1599 A.D.

succeeded him in 1597, foolishly declared war on the Mughals, and shut himself up in Asirgarh which was taken after a protracted siege. The fall of Asirgarh was the end of the independence of Khandesh which became the out-post of the Mughal advance into the Deccan (1599-1600 A.D.)

## CHAPTER VII

### STATE OF NORTHERN INDIA UNDER THE SULTANATE OF DELHI (1206—1326 A.D.)

#### SECTION I. THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Muslim rule which was established over the greater part of Hindustan created new formative forces of Indian culture and built up the ground-work on which Akbar and his successors raised their glorious edifice. This period extending down to about the middle of the sixteenth century, "becomes specially important for a correct appreciation of the Mughal contribution to Indian society, as well as for a proper estimate of the present social developments." We read from a very observant scholar that in India "an apparent want of change does not signify the poverty of Indian culture, but only an advanced stage of maturity, and is worth a careful study on that account," and that during this period of our study, the Indian culture was pushed forward by just such a force as quickens the pace of an agricultural society."\* A study of the political and economic and other factors which will help a proper perspective of social developments will be attempted here and in the chapter on the Rajputs. The administrative system under the Sultans of Delhi has not received prominent attention at the hands of historians who have written, however, elaborately about the Mughal government and its organisation. But some details can be learnt about it from the chroniclers of the period. The Emperor-Sultans of Dēlhi and the provincial Muslim rulers who became independent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were sovereign in their own persons and struck coins and caused the *khutba* to be read in their own names, with a few exceptions like Altamish. Muhammad bin Tughlak and Firuz Tughlak who invoked the aid of the Caliph to strengthen their title. Many of the Sultans were

\* K. Md. Ashraf—*Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan* (1200—1550 A.D.)—J. A. S. B. Vol. I, 1935—p. 108.

men of comparatively humble and obscure origin and could rest their titles only upon the sword and their own strength. "The imperial throne was a competitive post; everyone could aspire for it, at the risk of his neck if he failed; it had not become the monopoly of a particular dynasty." This is the explanation alike of the frequent military revolutions and changes of rulers and of the impossibility of weak men occupying the throne. The Sultans claimed, like the Persian monarchs of old, a divine superiority, if not for their persons, at least for their office. They were, in theory, unlimited despots, "bound by no law, subject to no checks and guided by no will except their own."

The authority of the Sultan rested on the support of the military class. Monarchy was a non-legal institution according to Islamic law; in India the application of this conception produced peculiar results. "In the first place all the distinction between the king *de facto* and the king *de jure* was lost. The emperor for the time being could claim against his opponents all the powers that the *Shariat* (Koranic Law) allows an elected governor against rebels. But a successful rebel.....could claim the same privileges against his enemies. Monarchy *de facto* was all that mattered.....no definite law could be evolved for the succession to the crown. Primogeniture was a principle unknown to Muslim law and the consequence was that uncertainty of succession and the caprices of the Sultans in preferring one son over others produced interminable wars of succession. Again, this feature induced successful rebels to exterminate wholesale the families and dynasties of their predecessors.

The position of the Sultan was thus beset with many dangers. He ruled only so long as he was successful. He lived in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust, feared a latent rebel or traitor in every noble and brother, and had to be ever alert and watchful. He had to be autocratic as a matter of necessity and use his authority in a high-handed manner in order to put down his enemies.

The theory of  
Muslim  
monarchy

The monarch's  
autocratic  
powers

But in this autocratic exercise of power, he was supported by the bulk of the people who regarded him as a bulwark against civil war and foreign invasion and who alone could keep the forces of anarchy in check. His greatest virtue was his strength; weakness was an unpardonable and fatal defect; and weak monarchs were easily kicked off the throne. The position of the Sultan was rendered naturally all the more potent, because of the habits of ready submissiveness of the mass of the people to any strong and well-ordered government and of the reverence for royalty inculcated by Hindu institutions and political traditions. "In all political matters the will of the Emperor-Sultan was supreme; it overrode the principles of Muslim law as well as the administrative traditions of the country. And these enormous powers he was expected to use for his own personal benefit and for the welfare of the generality of his subjects." Thus the position of the Sultan differed from that of the democratic Caliph of Islam and the limited rule of Hindu monarchs. He was not bound down by the principles of the Koran; and strong Sultans like Alau'd-din

**The influence of  
the Mullahs**

Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlak overrode the rules and decisions of the Kazis and the Mullahs. The Sultanate was a secular institution; the Sultan had to maintain a distinction between his private faith and his public duty as the ruler of a population, the great majority of whom were men of an alien faith and race. This theory of secular kingship was clearly set forth by Alau'd-din in the words he addressed to the Kazi of Bayana, as quoted by Barani. He was the first to develop this theory; and it was furthered by the rationalism of Muhammad bin Tughlak which set up the Mullahs so much against him that his schemes were all bitterly opposed and wrecked.

But the military class which was the main prop of the Sultanate, was largely under the influence of the fanatical Ulama who could easily incite them to acts of persecution and repression against the Hindus. The Ulama supplied the state with most of its lawyers and officials; and, naturally, many Sultans like Firuz Tughlak and Sikandar Lodi approximated to their ideal of a true Muslim ruler whose duty was to



extirpate idolatry and promote the cause of the true religion. All the Sultans had to maintain an appearance of conformity to the rituals and symbols of Islam which was the only principle of union and cohesion in the conquering tribe. It was very difficult even for strong kings like Alau'd-din to put down the influence of the priests who supported a "church-ridden monarchy," and wanted to use the administration as an instrument of conversion and bigotry. Naturally enough, they exercised great influence in this period when elements of Hindu resistance were still strong in the land. The Sultans confined their main duties to *jahangiri* and *jahandari* (the conquest and consolidation of new territories). They were ever seized with the ambition of territorial expansion, until "the invasion of the Deccan were looked upon as 'a necessary departmental section of the administration of empire'." Unlimited ambition, distant conquests and far-reaching campaigns rendered the empire too unwieldy for administrative purposes and compelled it to sink under its own weight. This ideal of conquest was a passion even with the very methodical and practical Sultan, Balban.

The government of the Sultans was made up of a number of diverse elements.\* He and his courtiers breathed the atmosphere of Persian pagan rule which had captured the imagination of the people and was praised by great poets like Firdausi.

The elements of the Sultanate

The army was organised on the model of the army organisation of the Mongol and Turki tribes. Beneath lay, largely undisturbed, the Hindu society snug in its village-life and caste-organisation. The isolated life of the Indian village and of its groups and its occupational outlook on life have never rendered it a very useful asset to the larger political life of the country; nor did they ever present any serious problem to the central government except in cases of infrequent combinations for defence or protest against an abnormal act of oppression.

Between the Sultans and their Hindu subjects "the unifying bond was not a bond of faith;" it was that of

\* M. Habib: *The Empire of Delhi in the Middle Ages* in *The Hindustan Review* (April, 1924), pp. 285, et seq. Quereshi: *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*.

sovereign and subject merely. The Hindus wanted to be left alone in their religious affairs; and for the greater portion of the period toleration was the general order.\* Of course there were cases of oppression, persecution and temple destruction. These were the inevitable accompaniments of the attempts to put down an armed and warlike population and keep them firmly under subjection. The destruction wrought by invaders like Mahmud of Ghazna was quite a different affair from the instances of persecution indulged in by Sultans like Alau'd-din and Firuz Tughlak. The Sultans could not afford the permanent alienation of their Hindu subjects who contributed the greater part of their material strength. "For them, communal conflict meant unavoidable ruin." Many Hindus were employed in the army and in the administration of the state; and Hindu converts occupied important places and sometimes even usurped the throne. The Hindus, though armed and warlike, were divided into numerous castes; and the Rajputs who were their leaders were "too disunited, too fond of internecine warfare, to combine either for internal administration or for external defence." In such a condition the Mussalmans remained the "strongest of the minorities"; and naturally enough they were the rulers.

It is difficult to distinguish clearly between the Sultan and the state. The monarch exercised considerable influence on the private life and the social habits of various classes of the people and he set the tone of society in general. Every Sultan desired that his palaces should attract the attention of the people and be a monument of his administration. Successive dynasties and individual monarchs founded new royal cities equipped with palaces, markets, gardens, mosques and ramparts; and the city of Delhi came to be composed of several royal cities and forts. The royal harems were very extensive establishments; and the mother and the chief wife of the Sultan were very

\* Prof. Ishwari Prasad and some other writers say, however, that toleration in the early middle age was not the rule, but the exception.

exalted personages. The slaves of the royal household were recruited from various nationalities, but bound together by allegiance to their master and were more devoted and faithful to him than the officials of the state and the nobles. Reference has already been made to the prominence to which royal slaves attained and to the services rendered by them. Their influence frequently made itself felt in the administration. There was a special class of courtiers who were the companions and attendants of the monarch and indirectly influenced his decisions and the policy of the state. Frequently they degenerated into mean flatterers of royalty and became discredited.

The imperial body-guard was under the control of a great nobleman and was elaborately organised. There were also the high officials of the royal household and the superintendents of the royal stores or *kharkhanas*. A separate staff of officers administered the crown lands. By all these the dignity of the Sultan was greatly increased.

“The vandalism of Mahmud of Ghazna in Hindustan was copied by the Emperors of Delhi in the Deccan.” They felt no duty of tolerance towards those Hindus who were not their subjects; and the natural fanaticism of the Mussalman armies found in the Deccan and elsewhere a “revolutionary and violent explosion.” As in the case of Mahmud of Ghazna, an important motive of these expeditions was greed for treasure and gold which whetted the appetite of fanaticism.\*

The administration of the state was carried on by the Sultan with the help of a number of departments. He was the supreme law-giver to the people, as well as the highest judge; he was the head of the army and either directed or personally led all campaigns. He controlled all affairs with the help of an efficient spy system and a bureaucracy. By means of spies he jealously controlled the governors of provinces as well as the great nobles and fief-holders. He controlled the system of

The Sultan, the head of the administration

currency and the markets; he personally heard complaints preferred by his subjects who had personal access to him. He patronised men of science and letters, took measures for famine and poor relief and interfered with the life of the people, "more than any government is likely to do to-day;"—his object being to keep his subjects "in the path of righteousness, through a system of warnings and punishments."

The Sultan maintained a magnificent court and an extravagant household, composed largely of slaves, which was organised on an elaborate plan. The imperial council and court The imperial council was composed of the highest officials and the king's most confidential advisers who discussed every important affair and gave their opinion in a fearless manner and whose support would greatly strengthen his hands. The imperial court was a different body and was a public assembly attended with an elaborate etiquette. Durbars were held on a number of public occasions when oaths of allegiance were taken, *nazars* were offered and large sums were given away in charity. The proceedings at these functions were controlled by a number of officials, the chief of whom, the *barbak*, is picturesquely described as the "*tongue*" of the Sultan. Everyone had a free right of access to the Sultan who heard their appeals and gave final decisions and received governors, ambassadors and other high personages. These bodies were different from the social or convivial gatherings of courtiers presided over by the king.

There were four chief ministries, viz., Revenue (*Diwan-i-Wizarat*); War (*Diwan-i-Arz*); Local and Provincial Government (*Diwan-i-Insha*); and Markets (*Diwan-i-Riyasat*). The Departments of Justice (presided over by the *Sadru's-Sadr*), Admiralty and Agriculture were subordinate ones.

The wazir supervised the revenue department, collected the taxes, controlled the tax-collectors (*amils*) in the home provinces who superseded the hereditary *chauduris* and *mukaddams* in the reign of Alau'd-din, fixed the proportion of the produce taken by the state and kept the

The departments  
of government

records. The minister of war was not the commander-in-chief; he managed the recruitment of the soldiers, supervised the annual musters of the cavalry contingents of the feudal nobles, organised the commissariat and the collection of spoils in times of war and controlled the revenue and land assignments to soldiers. The third minister was the channel of communication between the central and provincial governments and had to draft letters to the latter. The last minister controlled the markets, checked profiteering, licensed trades, collected octroi and market duties and dealt with famine and other conditions.

Each city and town had a *kazi* who settled disputes between Mussalmans according to the Koranic law and also petty disputes between Hindus and Mussalmans. Criminal law was common to both Hindus and Mussalmans and was largely secular. The Hindus had their own village *panchayats* for the decision of their civil disputes. There was the final appeal to the Sultan who was advised by Brahman pandits on questions of Hindu law.

The admiralty had no effective navy to supervise; but it controlled the traffic on the rivers and regulated ferries. The department of agriculture tried to reclaim waste land, clear forests, improve irrigation facilities and teach the ryots new agricultural methods.

The working of the departments became complex in course of time and required a large number of officials and clerks—thus giving rise to a regular bureau-  
**The ministers and the bureau-cracy**      reaucracy. Most of the officials were officers in the army who were burdened with civil duties. They were, many of them, recruited from the ranks of slaves who were thought to be the best possible guarantee against the universal tendency to local independence. By the time of Alau'd-din, most the Turki slaves who had formed the official aristocracy of the thirteenth century had been extinguished; and their place was quickly taken by native officials, Indian Mussalmans and their Hindu allies.

The possession of elephants and of hoards of gold and silver was illegal except in the case of the Sultan or of per-

sons specially exempted by him. Elephants formed a very useful part of the war-machine ; and hoards of bullion were useful in strengthening the position of the monarch in times of famine, insecurity and danger. The accumulation of treasure was a practice hallowed by ancient Hindu tradition.

The Sultanate of Delhi was the first real attempt made at a centralised Indian government which was rendered an inevitable necessity owing to the ever present danger of Mongol invasions and the disorganisation of the ancient village communities which had gone to pieces in the troubled centuries that went before. The despotic rule of the Sultans had proved its utility to the country. The rise of a centralised government, though it was that of the Mussalman, was wholesome to the cultivator suffering from the anarchy of the nobles and the disorder of the foreign invasions. The administrative systems of the provincial Mussalman dynasties were largely modelled on that of Delhi.

## SECTION II. THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

While Islam spread among the people owing to a variety of inducements\* and was often enforced, besides, at the point of the sword, the Rajputs and other higher castes were humbled ; and their political power was destroyed. But "the grand spiritual heritage of India remained undisturbed."

The spread of  
Islam

Disabilities were imposed on all non-Muslims ; but conversions were neither frequent nor systematic. The *jaziya* (poll-tax on unbelievers being theoretically a payment for being spared from death) was imposed by Firuz Tughlak on

The condition of  
the Muslims

Brahmans ; and Sikandar Lodi ordered a wholesale demolition of temples. The higher offices were always held by Muslims who escaped the rough toil of the husbandman ; their lands were taxed lightly, and they often acquired wealth by easy means. Their community soon degenerated in vigour and manliness, except when reinforced by constant

\* Like the temptation of office, of monetary rewards, higher political status, freedom from disabilities, etc.; Islam was simple in its doctrine while irregular unions between Hindus and Mussalmans were a further operating factor.

immigration from the north. Vices like drinking and gaming had to be put down by drastic ordinances, as in the case of the regulations issued by Balban and Alau'd-din.

The religious classes were the theologians, the ascetics, the Sayyids, the Pirs and their descendants. The theologians occupied all the judicial and religious offices. The Ulama was the body of state theologians and acquired great prominence in the state.\* The Sayyids claimed to be the descendants of the Prophet, and large numbers of them settled in India from the time of Balban onwards. There were other religious groups under *Pirs* and *Shaikhs*, some of whom rose to be influential spiritual preceptors and superseded the theologians.

Many of the Muslim nobles were Turkish in race at first. Later, Afghans and Mongols were incorporated into the nobility. In the thirteenth century the Turkish nobility was the chief prop of the Sultanate. Balban destroyed their influence and dissolved their organisation. Alau'd-din realised the disloyalty of the foreign nobility; but Muhammad bin Tughlak deliberately encouraged foreigners who came to seek their fortunes in the country. The first Indian wazir was Khan-i-Jahan under Firuz Tughlak; and this indicates a certain *rapprochement* between the ruling classes and the Hindu leaders.

The Hindus were overtaxed and prevented from acquiring wealth by a system of heavy taxation. They were generally excluded from higher offices; their standard of living became low; and they suffered various humiliations as the subject race. Consequently Hindu talent became "stunted and dwarfed and never got an opportunity of showing itself."† But Hindu genius was not totally blasted even in this period of harsh foreign rule; and the flourishing of great saints and reformers like Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya disproves the view that "Hindu

\* Dr. Ashraf condemns them as a class sometimes wanting in piety and regard for truth.

† Ishwari Prasad (p. 512); and J. N. Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III (pp. 296-7). The elucidation of this point should be of great interest to all Indians.

intellect had become altogether sterile under the stress of Muslim conquest."

Slaves were imported from many countries ; and even Hindu noblemen and chiefs began to employ them for military and domestic purposes. Socially slavery seems to have been common; but slaves were usually well-treated

and rose to respectable and even very high rank (*e.g.*, Malik Kafur, Makbal

Khan, and Khan-i-Jahan). As already noted, they formed the main element of the bureaucracy for a long time. But all the consequences of slavery on society became well marked among the people. Superstition and ignorance spread largely among the lower classes of the people. The liberty of women was increasingly restricted. It was found difficult to get girls married into respectable families. Seclusion was recommended for them as early as the time of Amir Khushru, the poet, who advised his daughter not to leave the *charkha* (spinning wheel) and "always to keep her face towards the wall of the house and her back towards the door so that nobody may be able to look at her." The immolation of women in distress was common, as well as *sati*.

The condition of the villages was very much the same as now. They were fewer and generally hedged round ;

and means of communication were very difficult.\* Trade, especially along the coast and by sea, was prosperous in Bengal

and Gujarat in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, according to the evidence of travellers like Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta and Wassaf. Ibn Batuta praised Bengal as a rich and fertile province ; and the Doab was noted for its great fertility. Alau'd-din kept the prices of commodities very low by his tariff legislation; and in the time of Firuz, according to the testimony of the historian Afif, commodities were very cheap. There were, of course, famines and epidemics ; but the rulers had some system of famine and poor relief. It was only towards the close of the fourteenth

\* For a description of trade and the chief industries, see Ashraf: *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan* in the J. A. S. B. (1935) pp. 205-225.



century that economic distress began to increase intensively owing to the prevailing anarchy and was heightened by Timur's invasion. Even then Bengal\* did not seriously suffer. Trade conditions began to revive in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

The lower classes among the Mussalmans were largely indistinguishable from the masses among the Hindus. The average Hindu convert did not change his old environment and continued to be marked by caste distinctions and a general sense of exclusiveness. The different classes of the Muslim community generally lived apart from one another, in separate quarters even in the same town. Mussalmans who came from foreign countries and were of non-Indian origin, were looked upon as being socially superior.

Hindu society was very much in the same condition, as it is even to-day, divided into castes and sub-castes. It has been stated that, as a result of the Muslim impact, "a number of old social and legal functions had passed outside the operation of caste rules." A number of factors worked to modify the rigidity of the caste system. The lower classes were not hampered by many of the old restrictions; and in some cases they made notable material progress and improved their status.

From the fourteenth century a *modus vivendi* began to be formed between the Hindus and the Mussalmans which

<b>Reconciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims</b>	worked towards a partial reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam.† It is claimed that "Indian Islam slowly began to assimilate the broad features of Hinduism."
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The influence of Hindu women in the *harems* of Mussalmans, the effect of converted Hindus upon Muslim society, the employment of Hindu ministers and clerks under government, the engagement of Hindu artisans and craftsmen by the ruling class in the erection of their buildings and monuments and the influence of Hindu thought on Sufi mystics—these, among others, were the forces working towards this reconciliation. While some of the rulers (like

\* According to Mahuan, an interpreter to the Chinese envoy who visited Bengal in 1406 (quoted by Ishwari Prasad; p. 529).

† An interesting survey is *Our Heritage* by Humayun Kabir

Firuz and Sikandar Lodi), encouraged the translation of Samskrit epics and other works the Hindus of the higher classes learnt Persian and studied Islamic literature. "The reconciliation of Mussalman and Hindu and the necessities of daily intercourse led gradually to the formation of a common language, Urdu, which, as its name signifies, was at first a camp jargon, formed by the mixture of Arabic, Persian and Turki with Western Hindi, the local vernacular of the Delhi region. Through the writings of the court-poets and historians it developed a literary form and became the *lingua franca* of Indian Mussalmans."\*

History writing flourished; and among the great historians of the period may be remembered Minhaj's-Siraj, Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif who were the main sources of information for later writers. AINU'L-MULK, a great nobleman of the Tughlak age, wrote letters and despatches which were regarded as models of official correspondence; and they give valuable information regarding the social and economic conditions of the land. Jaunpur was a famous seat of Arabic learning and Muslim theology; and a number of poets and theologians, like Amir Khushru and Badr-i-Chach, flourished at Delhi and elsewhere. The Hindu mind also displayed activity in this period in many branches of learning like philosophy and jurisprudence. The Hindu literary and intellectual revival was an accompaniment and largely a consequence of the religious renaissance that appeared in the country. It will be detailed later in the book.

The Muslim rule of the country led also to the development of art on a large scale. The early Muslim rulers of the land employed Hindu craftsmen who persisted in retaining their own ideas and symbols in the structures they erected for the conquerors.

\* Ishwari Prasad, Chapter XIII. Its grammar and structure are largely Hindus, while the words are mostly Persian. It shades off into Hindi by gradations; it was evolved in the Sultanate period; and its first noted writer was Amir Khushru whose Persian books contain many Hindi words. (V. A. Smith; *Oxford History of India*, p. 259).

The Muslims in India adapted to their own needs the features of the indigenous architecture and developed what may be called an Indian Muslim style. The open court of the Hindu temple, surrounded by chambers or colonnades, lent itself to conversion for use as a mosque. The temple architecture of the Chauhans in Delhi and Ajmer was adapted, with but few changes, to the use of the Muslim conquerors. The principal monuments of Kutbu'd-din and Iltutmish (like the Kutb Mosque at Delhi, the Tomb of Altamish and the Kutb-Minar) show Hindu elements and were largely built out of Hindu materials. It was under Alau'd-din Khilji that a marked change appeared in the style of architecture which became more consistently Arabic in its design and technique.\* Alau'd-din's fort of

**Its development** Siri (near Delhi) and his great gateway were marked by much magnificence and solidity; while Ghiyasu'd-din Tughlak's grim fortress of Tughlakabad, his son's city of Jahanpanah and the numerous mosques and palaces of Firuz attest a continuous artistic activity. All the Mussalman buildings from the time of Alau'd-din to that of Sher Shah exhibit "a stern simplicity of design in marked contrast to the elaborate ornamentation with which they began."† But gradually they got back to rich sculpture and ornamentation in marble. Delhi under Muslim rule quickly asserted its own individuality of style; and the Muslim architecture of the place allowed "Hindu craftsmanship only a very limited play."

The styles of the buildings of the great provincial dynasties show marked individuality. The Sharqi monuments of Jaunpur were adorned with huge Saracenic gateways and propylons and were possibly influenced by Hindu architects. The art of the Sultans of Gujarat is richer and more varied than that of Jaunpur;‡ and the mosques of Ahmadabad are full of Hindu and Jain

\* Page: *A Historical Memoir on the Kutb, Delhi* (Memoirs of the Arch. Survey of India), p. 3.

† See Burgess on Indian Architecture in *The Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Chapter V; and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, Ch. XXIII.

‡ A fine description of the Gujarat monuments is given in Commissariat—*History of Gujarat* (1940).

designs with all their elegance and finish. The art of Gujarat is regarded as having been more directly influenced by the temple architecture of the locality than any other phase of Muslim architecture in India. The monuments of Mandu (in Malwa) and Gaur and Pandua (in Bengal) are also good fruits of artistic work, but do not show marked individuality—except that the buildings of Gaur have pointed arches and a peculiar kind of roof. In Bengal the Muslims adopted the native fashion of building in brick and imitated the Hindu methods of adornment. The art of the Bahmani Sultans has a rich output; but, one by one, all these brilliant variant styles\* were absorbed, even as the kingdoms themselves were, in that of the great Mughal Empire.

\* Due, according to Fergusson (*History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Book VII, Chapter III), to a Puritanical reaction against the quasi-Hinduism of earlier examples.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BAHMANI KINGDOM

We have seen that the eccentric rule of Muhammad bin Tughlak was the cause of the many rebellions that broke out in the empire between 1343 and 1351 A.D. The Deccan, in particular, was seething with discontent and insurrections were more frequent here than in any other part of the empire. To keep a strict watch over the malcontents, the Tughlak Sultan appointed in 1346, a low-born adventurer, Aziz Himar, as his viceroy at Daulatabad. About the same time he despatched two nobles with instructions to bring to his presence in Gujarat the Amirs of the Deccan (Daulatabad) whose loyalty he suspected. The Amirs obeyed the call of the emperor; but while half-way, they took counsel together, slew the imperial guard, hastened back to Daulatabad and after looting the treasury, proclaimed the independence of the Deccan. One of them, an old man. Ismail Makh, was elected king under the title of Nasiru'd-din. In great fury, Muhammad bin Tughlak hastened to Daulatabad and defeated the rebels in a hotly contested battle. He could not remain at Daulatabad to completely put down the revolution as fresh rebellions broke out in Gujarat. Leaving matters to be settled by his generals, the Sultan started towards Gujarat. In his absence, the imperial forces were defeated by the conspirators, prominent among whom was one Hasan Kangu (or Gangu). Ismail Makh wisely resigned the royal dignity in favour of Hasan, as being the fittest to occupy the throne in such stirring times. Hasan consequently ascended the throne in Daulatabad in 1347 and assumed the title of Alau'd-din Bahman Shah. Four years later, Tughlak died; and his successor, Firuz Shah, was so busy suppressing rebellions nearer his capital that he had no time to think of Deccan affairs.

At the time of its birth the Bahmani state extended from Berar on the north to the Tungabhadra on the south

though the Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar claimed and frequently warred for the possession of the Richur Doab between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. At first the petty rulers on the west coast of the Deccan were not under Bahmani control; while eastern Telingana on the east coast was independent under Kanhoyya (or Krishna-deva) Nayak of Warangal who claimed to represent the Kakatiya dynasty.

The early career of Hasan, the founder of the Bahmani dynasty, as given by Ferishta, reads like a romance. He was one of the multitude of emigrants **From peasant to prince** who had to change their residence from Delhi to Devagiri (Daulatabad) at the behest of the mad Tughlak. He was born in 1290 and in humble circumstance. He was employed by a Brahman of Delhi, Gangu, as a field-labourer. He rose to be a commander of one hundred horse. His ambition was roused; and he looked to the Deccan, 'then the *El Dorado* of the Muhammadan imagination,' for fresh fields of adventure. He had not to wait long for the realisation of his dreams. Hasan was one of the officers selected by Muhammad bin Tughlak to accompany his viceroy of the Deccan, Kutlugh Khan. At Devagiri he won the confidence of the people and doubtless enriched himself. An adventurer, he soon realised that he could better his prospects by joining the small band of foreign amirs who were about to renounce their loyalty to Delhi. Hasan was 57 years old when he became king; and in the hour of his triumph he did not forget his old master, the Brahman Gangu, who was appointed his finance minister.

This account is given by Ferishta. It is generally assumed by historians who based their account of the Bahmanis on Ferishta that Hasan had **The title Bahmani** the title of *Sultan Ala'ud-din Hasan, Gangu Bahmani*. The real title would appear to be 'Alau'd-din Bahman Shah,' i.e., Alau-d'din of the race of Bahman. Ferishta wrongly thought that the word Bahman stood for Gangu, the Brahman—a mistake widely repeated by later historians. It should be noted that Hasan claimed descent from the hero, Bahman, the

son of Isfandiyar.\* The name Kanku which occurs in inscriptions and in the legends on coins was said by Ferishta to represent Gangu; it might really have been a corruption of Kaikaus, the name of Bahman's father.

The state thus founded by Sultan Hasan and known in history as the Bahmani kingdom, extended as far as the

**Boundaries of the kingdom** Tapti on the north and the Tungabhadra and the Krishna on the south. Its

boundaries on the east and west varied from time to time; and it was only at the close of the fifteenth century that it extended from sea to sea. The capital of this infant kingdom was at Gulbarga, now in the Nizam's Dominions. Alau'd-din Bahman Shah divided his kingdom into four provinces or *tarafs*—Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar. He placed each in charge of a governor who enjoyed large powers. But lest these governors should become independent, he frequently undertook tours of inspection. His reign was frequently disturbed by rebellions of the Muslim nobles, including old Ismail Makh who had resigned the throne to him. Nevertheless he contrived to capture Goa and other places on the west coast and to lead an expedition into Telingana. He had the able Saifu'd-din Ghuri, the governor of Gulbarga, as his minister, who continued to be the regent or lieutenant of the kingdom till 1378. The Sultan died of malaria in February 1358 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Muhammad Shah I.

The reign of Muhammad Shah who perfected the organisation of the army, was full of bloody wars undertaken against the neighbouring ruler of

**Muhammad Shah I (1358-1375)** Warangal and the Raya of Vijayanagar. The two latter, imagining that after

Sultan Alau'd-din, the Bahmani kingdom would grow weak, demanded the restoration of all lands taken possession of by the Sultan. Muhammad, while

\* See Haig's *Landmarks of the Deccan*, p. 3; and Dr. V.A. Smith's *Oxford History of India*, 1923 edition, p. 275 foot-note. The author of the *Burhan-i-Maasir* which is a very good authority for the history of the Deccan states that Hasan traced his pedigree from Bahman bin Isfandiyar. See also *Cambridge History*, Vol. III, p. 373.

pretending to consider the question, secretly prepared for war. He first attacked Warangal on the ground that Prince Vinayakadeva, son of Krishnadeva, had seized some horses destined for the Sultan. Though defeated, the prince was pardoned; but later, his insolence provoked Muhammad Shah into leading another expedition into Telingana, capturing his fort and torturing him to death. In the end the Warangal chief had to cede Golconda to the Sultan. He also presented to the Shah a costly gem-set throne, originally prepared by Pratapa Rudradeva II for Muhammad bin Tughlak.

The war with Vijayanagar was waged on flimsy grounds. In a moment of intoxication the Sultan ordered a draft on the Vijayanagar treasury to be paid to certain court-singers of his.\* There had been already trouble over the minting of gold coins by the Sultan which was objected to by the rulers of Vijayanagar and Warangal as tending to the diminution in circulation of their own coins. Enraged at this insult, Bukka Raya, the Hindu king of Vijayanagar, seized the rich Doab of Raichur between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, which was a veritable bone of contention between the two powers. Near Adoni, a fortress south of the Tungabhadra, a pitched battle took place in which the Hindus were routed (1367). In this battle the Muslims employed artillery worked by European and Turkish gunners. The Hindus also used guns in the campaign. Muhammad Shah next invested the great city of Vijayanagar itself and, after considerable trouble, inflicted another defeat on the Raja, killing more than 9,000 of the latter's forces. Bukka Raya sued for peace and agreed to honour the Sultan's cheque on his treasury. According to Ferishta, the Muhammadan historian, Muhammad Shah killed in the course of seventeen years nearly 500,000 Hindus! He died in 1375.

The Sultan is said to have been a diligent and methodical administrator and reorganised both the central and the provincial administration. He instituted a cabinet of eight ministers; and these were the *Vakil*

\* This is what Ferishta says: The real reason for the war was Bukka's claim of the Raichur Doab.



us *Saltanah* (the lieutenant of the kingdom), the *Wazir* (superintending minister), the ministers of finance and foreign affairs, the *Nazir* (assistant minister of finance), the *Peshwa* (associated with the lieutenant of the kingdom), the *Kotwal* (chief of the police and magistrate of the capital) and the *Sadr-i-Jahan* (chief judge and minister of religion and endowments). The royal bodyguard consisted of 200 officers and 4,000 troopers and was divided into four reliefs. These institutions lasted as long as the kingdom endured and were closely imitated by the branch Sultanates that rose on its ruins. The Sultan also got from the puppet Caliph of Egypt a confirmation of his claim to be "the King of the Deccan."

Muhammad was succeeded by his eldest son, Mujahid Shah, whose first act was to order the king of Vijayanagar, in an insolent way, to withdraw altogether from the Doab where the Hindu ruler possessed a few fortresses. This led to a war and the defeat of Bukka Raya.\* The victor did not live long; for he was murdered by his uncle, Daud Shah, who had been severely reprimanded by the Sultan for dereliction of duty. After the murder of Mujahid, his sister placed on the throne Muhammad Shah, a grandson of Hasan Kangu, the founder of the dynasty. This king was a man of peace and fond of poetry and philosophy. He invited the great Persian poet, Hafiz, to his court; but the latter had a dread of the sea and sent his excuses in a well-known ode. His subjects bestowed on him the title of the "Second Aristotle." He died of fever in 1397 A.D., leaving his throne to his eldest son, Ghiyasu'd-din.

The reign of Ghiyasu'd-din was one of confusion and palace revolutions. He was a hot-headed man, fond of pleasure and addicted to all kinds of vice. One of his Turkish slaves, Lachin, had a beautiful daughter whom the Sultan wanted for his harem. Lachin, by a clever ruse, caught hold of his master and blinded him. He then placed on the throne Ghiyasu'd-din's brother Sham-

\* This is what Ferishta says: Really Mujahid's siege of Vijayanagar failed.

su'd-din. But the two daughters of the blinded Sultan, who married Firuz Khan and Ahmad Khan respectively (the sons of Daud Shah), collected a force, dethroned and put out the eyes of Shamsu'd-din and butchered the slave, Lalchin. This revolution resulted in Firuz Khan ascending the throne under the title of Firuz Shah Bahmani (November 1397).

Firuz Shah Bahmani, the eighth Sultan (1397-1422 A.D.), was one of the most gifted of the Bahmani rulers. In his time the kingdom attained to his highest prosperity. He paid great attention to the import trade of the country. The ports of Goa and Chaul were regularly visited by foreign vessels. The Sultan appreciated talent wherever it was found and always surrounded himself with eminent men. He had a weakness for women and his harem was full of them. It is said that he married 300 ladies belonging to various nationalities; and he was able to converse with each of them in her own language. Firuz re-organised the administrative machinery of the kingdom and employed Brahmins extensively in important posts. He was a sincere but not a fanatic, Muslim; and it was only after some years, after his accession that he degenerated into a voluptuous and jaded ruler. He patronised the well-known saint, Gisu Daraz, who came from Delhi and settled at Gulbarga.

Firuz Shah was also a great soldier. He undertook twenty-four campaigns and thereby acquired the greater part of Telingana. Two of his campaigns deserve to be noticed. The long truce between the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagar was unfortunately broken by the impetuous action of Prince Bukka, the son of Harihara II, who had succeeded to the throne after Bukka Raya. This prince suddenly overran the Raichur Doab, and reached the southern bank of the Krishna. Taken by surprise, Firuz was baffled, but a Kazi volunteered to bring about the assassination of the hot-headed Bukka.\* Disguising himself as a musician, the Kazi befriended a dancing-girl in the camp of Prince Bukka and while giving

\*This fanciful account is by Ferishta.

a performance in the latter's presence plunged a dagger into the heart of Bukka who died. Great confusion prevailed in the Hindu camp; and Firuz, taking advantage of it, crossed the Krishna and massacred the entire Hindu force. The aged Harihara paid a penalty of £400,000 for the insensate folly of his son.

The other noteworthy episode in the history of Firuz was connected with Nihal, a beautiful girl of the goldsmith caste, who was the innocent cause of a big struggle between the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagar. Carefully trained by a Brahman to dance and sing, Nihal was loved by Devaraya who succeeded Harihara. Nihal of Mudkal, in the Doab, did not care to return his love as she believed she was destined to marry a Muslim sovereign. Devaraya sent a large force into the Doab in pursuit of the girl. War ensued; for Firuz, in his wrath at this unprovoked attack, let loose his forces on Vijayanagar, slaughtered as many as he could and forced Devaraya to give his daughter in marriage to him—a humiliation which was keenly felt by the Hindus.\* Bankapur and other districts were ceded to the Sultan as dowry. Nihal, the cause of the war, was subsequently married to the son of Firuz.

About 1420, Firuz led an unprovoked attack against Pungal, a strong fortress on the frontier of the Warangal state. The Warangal chief, assisted by Devaraya II of Vijayanagar, resisted the invasion and scattered the invading forces. The whole Doab would now have fallen to Devaraya but for the energy and bravery displayed by the brother of the Sultan, Ahmad Khan, who contrived to get Firuz to resign the throne and had himself recognised as Sultan by the army. Shortly after his resignation, Firuz died.

Firuz was a great builder. He built a city not far off from Gulbarga and named it Firuzabad. He adorned Gulbarga with many edifices, the most notable being the principal mosque.†

\*Firishta; But the *Burhan-i-Masir*, a better authority, makes no mention of this marriage. Firishta's story is doubtful.

†G. Yazdani: *The Great Mosque of Gulbarga in Islamic Culture*, Vol. II, Part I.

Hasan Khan, the eldest son of Firuz Shah, proved himself worthless to govern a kingdom which required a hardy soldier to manage its affairs. Besides, Hasan gave himself up entirely to the beautiful Nihal. So the disgusted nobility accepted Ahmad Khan as their Sultan.

Ahmad Shah (1422-1435) carried on the traditional war with the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. He pillaged and destroyed the country around the Hindu capital and committed atrocities that beggared description. It is stated that after the war the number of Hindus slain amounted to twenty thousand—"he halted three days and made a festival in celebration of the bloody event"—an action which earned for the Sultan, the title of *Wali* or Saint. Ultimately the Raja of Vijayanagar, finding resistance hopeless, sued for peace which was granted on the Sultan's own terms.

Ahmad next marched north towards Warangal, besieged the city, killed its chief and annexed the whole of the country (1423). The only reverse that he sustained during his reign was at the hands of the Sultan of Gujarat, due to a mistake on the part of his general. Ahmad Shah extended his conquests to Elichpur and rebuilt the hill-forts of Gawilgarh and Narnala to protect his northern frontier. He died after a reign of nearly thirteen years (Feb. 1435). Before his death, the Sultan changed his capital from Gulbarga to

**Change of capital** Bidar which occupied the site of ancient Vidarbha (1429) sixty miles north-east of the former capital. Meadows Taylor

fully justifies such a change owing to the better climate of Bidar, its excellent fortifications and its strategic position. Ahmad Shah was superstitious and fanatic, though it is said that he was converted to the Shiah faith under the influence of a Persian saint. He also ordered the composition of the *Bahman-Nama*, a versified history of the Bahmani dynasty, which has been unfortunately lost.

The new king was Alau'd-din Shah (1435-1457) the eldest son of Ahmad Shah. His early days as the Bahmani ruler were full of domestic troubles. His brother, Muhammad

Khan, rebelled and attempted to get the throne. He was however defeated and pardoned. Next, trouble came from his wife, Malika Jahan, who invoked the aid of her father, the king of Khandesh, against her husband, as the latter transferred his affections to the daughter of a Konkan baron. Nasir Khan, the Khandesh ruler, got the assistance of the king of Gujarat and some Deccan nobles, and invaded Benar. Alau'd-din came out successful from the contest. He welcomed his victorious general Maliku'l-Tujar, the governor of Daulatabad, the leader of the foreign party and a Persian, and showered honours on him and other foreign officers. This tactless act led to bitter internal feuds between the Shiahhs and the Sunnis, (foreigners and Deccanis) which in the end broke up the unity of the Muslim dominion in the Deccan. It may be noted that the Muhammadans of the Deccan in the mediæval times were sharply divided into two sections, the Shiahhs and the Sunnis. Muslims of foreign extraction who entered India as adventurers, such as the Mughals, Persians, Turks, and Arabs were Shiahhs. The Sunnis were Deccani Muslims; and most of them were converted Hindus. The latter had the support of the Abyssinian settlers in the country. In point of military valour and general political intelligence, the foreigners excelled the Sunnis and hence they were frequently employed by the local Muhammadan rulers as civil servants and leaders of troops. Most of the founder's followers were foreigners of whom successive waves regularly came to settle in the country. Even during the time of Alau'd-din, the Deccani party lost no opportunity to destroy the foreign favourites of the king by trumping up false accusations against them. On one occasion when a small force was despatched by Alau'd-din against the Konkan, the imperial forces under Maliku'l-Tujar were beguiled and a large number treacherously done to death by the Deccani chiefs who later on began to accuse the Shiah chief of treachery. Alau'd-din, however, found out the real truth and punished the Deccani party. The last act of this king was the suppression of a revolt headed by his nephew,

Alau'd-din II  
(1435-1457)

Shiahhs and  
Sunnis

Sikandar Khan. The Sultan continued the never-ending struggle with Vijayanagar whose ruler had quickly reorganised his army by recruiting a large number of Muslims, mostly mounted foreign archers, and now invaded the Raichur Doab and captured Mudgal, ravaging the country as far as Bijapur. In the end the Hindus sued for peace.

## SECTION II. THE DECLINE AND BREAK-UP OF THE STATE

The next reign was that of Humayun, a tyrant of the worst type who favoured the party of foreigners and whose death after a short reign of three years was hailed with joy by the people.

**Humayun, the  
Zalim (1457-  
1461)**

The tyrant Humayun, nicknamed Zalim (oppressor)\* had a son to succeed him, Nizam Shah, a boy of nine. The queenmother acted as regent and very energetically defended Warangal against the Orissa ruler who invaded it on behalf of a scion of the old Warangal house. The boy-king died of heart failure in July 1463.

**Nizam Shah  
(1461-1463)**

He was succeeded by his younger brother, Muhammad Shah III (1463-1482), in whose time the Bahmani kingdom attained to its zenith. But with his death its disruption also commenced. The chief military exploits of the Sultan who was the last of the great Bahmanis were the recovery of Belgaum and Goa from the Hindu ruler of Vijayanagar, his subjugation of the feudal lord of Kondapalli for an act of disloyalty and a raid for booty on Conjeevaram.† While at Kondapalli, he destroyed a Hindu temple and murdered the Brahmin priests, an act which, while it brought him the title of Ghazi, was looked upon by the Deccani Muhammadans as foreboding nothing but evil for the Bahmanis. But the foulest deed of this

**Muhammad  
Shah III (1463-  
1482)**

\* According to the chronicler, "the terrible bearer of his (Sultan's) wrath ever consumed both Hindu and Muslim alike, the broker of his fury sold at one price the guilty and the innocent, and the executioner of his punishment slew whole families for a single fault."

† Sewell denies the truth of this raid.

Sultan was the murder of his own minister, Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, then seventy-eight years old.\*

There were, as has already been stated, two parties in the country, the party of foreigners (Persians, Mughals and others) and the Deccani party (being mostly local Muhammadans). The kingdom had outgrown its old limits. It

New provinces  
created

now extended from the eastern to the western sea. The provinces of Gulbarga and Daulatabad had been doubled in area; and Telingana had been more than doubled and had been extended to Rajahmundry and beyond. Mahmud Gawan who had been given the title of Amirul-Umara was the governor of Gulbarga; and another foreign noble, Yusuf Adil Khan, was the governor of Daulatabad. Telingana was held by Malik Hasan and Berar was under another Deccani. Gawan's plan was to divide each of these four provinces into two; thus Telingana would be divided into the two provinces of Rajahmundry and Warangal; Berar into Gawilgarh (north) and Mahur (south); Daulatabad into those of Daulatabad on the east and Junnair on the west; and Gulbarga into those of Belgaum on the west and Gulbarga on the east. The governors of these new provinces were to have their powers curtailed in other ways; crown lands and many forts were taken off from their jurisdiction. These new provinces were fairly divided between the Deccanis and the foreigners. The Deccanis were jealous of the growing power of the Persian minister, Mahmud Gawan, and plotted against his life. They forged a letter bearing the signature of the minister and addressed to the Raja of Orissa, wherein Mahmud Gawan was made to say that he was tired of the drunken follies of the Sultan and would help the Orissa ruler to invade the kingdom with a view to the future partition of the state between themselves. To this letter they affixed the seal of Gawan which they obtained through a slave.

Murder of  
Muhmud Gawan

The plotters further contrived to place the forged note before the Sultan when he was in a state of intoxication.

\* Excellent life of this minister in Sherwani *Mahmud Gawan* (1941).

Muhammad Shah, without ascertaining the truth of the matter, had the minister brought before him and ordered his execution. This brutal murder of Gawan who, more than any one else, was responsible for administrative progress in the Bahmani kingdom, sent a thrill of indignation throughout the Sultan's dominions and directly paved the way for its break-up. Gawan had served the dynasty loyally for thirty-five years; and had he lived, he might have even patched up the feud between the two parties. As it was, the Sultan was deserted by the foreigners and also by a section of the Deccanis.

The next reign, that of Mahmud Shah (1482-1518), son of the murderer of Gawan, was an unceasing tale of murder and intrigue. During his time the various provincial governments became practically independent:

**Mahmud Shah :** and each contrived to set up a separate  
1482-1510 government in his jurisdiction. The

first to do so were Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur and Ima-du'l-Mulk of Berar. The former had a romantic career. A younger brother of Sultan Muhammad II, who stormed Constantinople, he escaped the fury of his brother who ordered his execution, through the love of his mother who substituted for her son a Georgian slave and sent him in disguise to Alexandria. When he was sixteen years old, his nurse divulged his secret. To escape his brother's vengeance, he fled to Shiraz. He reached India in 1459, was

**Career of Yusuf** his brother's vengeance, he fled to Shi-  
**Adil Shah** raz. He reached India in 1459, was entrapped by a merchant and sold at Bidar as a Georgian slave to Gawan. Under Gawan he rose to the high position of governor of Daulatabad, the highest post that could be held by any in the service of the Bahmanis. Soon after the murder of his master, Yusuf extorted from the Sultan the government of Bijapur, while his two confederates obtained the governorship of the two Berars. Later on, in the reign of Mahmud Shah, Muhammad III's successor, one Malik Ahmed, a converted Hindu of the Deccani party and a son of Nizamu'l Mulk who had succeeded Gawan as the minister, set himself up as the ruler of Ahmadnagar. This example was promptly followed by Yusuf Adil Khan, who actually



crowned himself as king of Bijapur and thus started the Adil Shahi dynasty there. In 1490 the rulers of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Berar are said to have formally assumed independence. Their dynasties were known, from the titles borne by the founders, as the Nizam Shahi, the Adil Shahi and the Imad Shahi lines. Except the Nizam Shahi ruler, the others continued to profess loyalty to the Bahmani Sultan, in spite of their practical independence. The governor of Telingana, Kutb-ul-Mulk, founded the Kutb Shahi line of Golconda. Only Bidar now remained to the Bahmanis who were wholly under the influence of their minister, Qasim Barid. Qasim Barid proclaimed his independent rule in 1492; but he was conciliated by the Sultan and given the title of Amir Jumla (prime minister). The puppet kings, who followed Muhammad Shah III, lost even Bidar; one of the family of Qasim Barid who acted as minister, drove away the last of the Bahmanis, Kalimulla, and reigned in his stead, thus establishing the Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar. Kalimulla besought in vain the help of the Mughal Emperor, Babar, who at this time had won the battle of Panipat. That warrior had much to do for his own power. The great kingdom established by Sultan Alau'd-din Bahman Shah was thus split up by 1526 into five separate and independent Sultanates—Berar and Ahmadnagar in the north, Bijapur and Golconda in the south, and Bidar in the centre. There were eighteen kings of the Bahmani line; many of them were addicted to drink; and some were bigots. Their relations with their subjects differed but little from those of the other rulers of those days. The disruption of the kingdom was due largely to “the degeneracy of the later Bahmanis and to their subserviency to ministers whom the provincial governors would not accept as masters.”

### SECTION III. THE DECCAN SULTANATES

In the previous section we saw how the Bahmani kingdom was split up into five independent Sultanates. These were (1) the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar, (2) the Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar, (3) the Kutb Shahi dynasty

**Break-up of the kingdom**

**The five Sultanates**

of Golconda, (4) the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar and (5) the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur. The purpose of this section is to sketch in rough outline how these Sultanates flourished and were later absorbed in the Mughal empire.

Of these five states, Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar were large and powerful. Yusuf Adil Shah and Kuli Kutb Shah, the founders, respectively, of the Bijapur and Golconda states, were Shiah; and Burhan, the son and successor of Ahmad Nizam Shah, was converted to that faith while most of his successors were Shiah also. The small Sunni state of Berar was absorbed by Ahmadnagar in 1574, and Bidar was swallowed up by Bijapur in 1619. In spite of frequent intermarriages, community of religion and common interest against external foes, the three larger states were frequently at war with one another; the smaller states were prolonged in their existence by the mutual jealousies of the larger ones. None put forth its full strength to avert the common danger from the Mughals. The occasional defection of the Adil Shahis from the Shiah faith revived the feuds between the Deccanis and the foreigners; while minor frontier disputes between Bijapur and Ahmadnagar and between the latter and Berar were productive of causes of war. It is enough to know that Bijapur and Ahmadnagar were almost always at war. The chief cause of their never-ending struggle was the frontier fortress of Sholapur. During this period of war Golconda attempted to maintain the balance of power as the destruction of either of the belligerent states meant danger to her very existence. Berar also played her part in this game astutely enough.

### Berar

From the beginning, Berar had cause of quarrel with Ahmadnagar. Within the borders of Berar there were the town and district of Pathri, which Burhan Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar claimed as the patrimony of his Brahman ancestors. This led to war between Berar and Ahmadnagar. At one stage

in the struggle, Alau'd-din Imad Shah invoked the aid of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (1529). This was an ill-conceived measure, as it gave the ambitious Gujarat ruler a hold in the affairs of the Deccan 'which seemed at one time likely to become permanent.\* Berar thus hated Ahmadnagar: and when the latter state joined the confederacy against Vijayanagar, to be narrated presently, it held sullenly aloof. After the battle of Talikota (1565), the Muslim states wanted to punish Berar for her neutrality. Bijapur and Ahmadnagar invaded the little principality. In the meanwhile, a revolution had taken place in Berar. Burhan Imad Shah, the last king of the Imad Shahi dynasty was dethroned; and power passed into the hands of his minister, Tufal Khan. This revolution furnished another pretext for Murtaza Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar to invade Berar (1572). He came with a large force ostensibly to restore Burhan to his throne, but in reality to annex Berar to his own kingdom. In the war that followed, Tufal Khan was defeated and imprisoned. His son surrendered Gawilgarh; and the conquest of Berar was thus complete. Both the minister and his son and the Sultan Burhan Imad Shah were shut up in a fortress; and all died shortly afterwards. Berar now formed part of Ahmadnagar (1574). But the latter could not retain this ill-gotten property. The Moghals soon appeared in the Deccan and were knocking at the door of Ahmadnagar. Chand Bibi, the queen-regent, of whose heroism we shall read later on, got the invaders off by ceding Berar. Thus it now passed on to Akbar who made his second son, Sultan Murad, its governor. It was not, however, until early in the reign of Jehangir that the Moghals got a firm hold over Berar.

### Bidar

Bidar is the ancient Vidarbha, closely and pleasingly connected with the romance of Nala and Damayanti. In historical times the city of Vidarbha was restored by Raja Vijayasena, one of the Valabhis (319 A.D.). Vidarbha remained in comparative obscurity during the whole of what we may

Bidar and its history

\* See Haig's *Landmarks of the Deccan*, p. 15.

call the Hindu period of Indian History. In 1322 Muhammad bin Tughlak captured Bidar (town of Vidarbha). In the reign of that eccentric sovereign, Bidar was a chief centre of revolt. Alau'd-din Hasan Bahmani captured it in 1347 and proclaimed himself, immediately after this event, as Sultan Bahman Shah. Under this king, Bidar was the head-quarters of one of the provinces (*tarafs*). As has already been pointed out, the ninth Bahmani Sultan, Ahmad Shah Wali, was so charmed with the climate and situation of Bidar that he changed his capital from Gulbarga to it. Since then Bidar continued to be the capital of the Bahmani Sultans and of the Barid Shahis who succeeded them in power.

The circumstance under which the Barid Shahis brushed aside the puppet Sultans of Bidar and usurped power has already been noted in a preceding paragraph. It remains to trace in brief the political fortunes of the Barid Shahis. After the break-up of the Bahmani kingdom into five independent Sultanates, Bidar had to fight for her very existence. Thanks to the craft and political acumen of its Sultans, it was able to maintain its independence for some time. Its policy had been to join other Muslim states against Bijapur. It did not disdain the help of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar whenever it suited its purpose. The greatest struggle against Bijapur was in the time of Amir Ali Barid who succeeded his father, Qasim Barid, in 1504. His policy was to ally himself with the rulers of Ahmadnagar, Berar and Golconda against Bijapur which, however got the upper hand. Amir Ali Barid died in 1542; his successor, Ali Barid, assumed openly the title of Shah and maintained the traditional hostility to Bijapur. He was followed by several short-lived rulers. In 1619, Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur marched against Bidar, took captive its ruler Ali Barid II, and formally annexed Bidar to Bijapur. In 1656, Aurangzib laid siege to the fortress of Bidar and after a strenuous campaign succeeded in reducing it. It was then promptly annexed to the Mughal empire. To-day the chief interest of Bidar consists in its magnificent tombs of the Bahmanis

and the Barid Shahis and other structures of great architectural beauty, including the mosques and other buildings alleged to have been constructed by the able Bahmani statesman, Mahmud Gawan.

### Golconda

The kingdom of Golconda was extensive and rich in resources. The fort of Golconda stands on a rocky hill on the northern bank of the Musi, about seven miles from the city of Hyderabad.

Golconda

The fort is surrounded by strong walls within which the city of Golconda once stood. The founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda was a Baharlu Turk, Sultan Quli, by name, who rose to great power in the days of the last Bahmanis, and got the *jaghir* of Golconda and the governorship of Telingana, with the title

Quli Qutb Shah

Qutbu'l-Mulk. In 1512 Quli Qutbu'l-

Mulk who had been for some years practically independent, proclaimed himself the independent ruler of Golconda, with the title of Sultan Quli Qutb Shah. He built a strong fortress at Golconda and fought hard against Shitab Khan who got possession of Warangal and the neighbouring places on both sides of the Krishna. Shitab Khan was probably a Hindu in origin and became the independent ruler of Warangal about 1504.\*

Warangal was permanently annexed to the dominions of Golconda in the reign of Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1550-80). Quli Qutb Shah himself waged wars with the rulers of Vijayanagar, Bijapur and Bidar and extended his kingdom in the north up to the Godavari. He was assassinated in 1543, at the instigation of his son. Ibrahim, the fourth of the line, proposed the combination against the Raya of Vijayanagar which led to the battle of Talikota. His son, Muhammad Quli (1580-1612), made large

The later rulers of the line

additions to the Golconda fort and built, as his residential capital, the city of

Hyderabad which he called Bhagnagar, after his favourite Hindu mistress, Bhagmati. Abdulla Qutb Shah (1626-72) devoted much care to the improvement of the Golconda

\*See *Shitab Khan of Warangal*. (Hyderabad Arch. Series, No. 9).

fortress. He took little part in resisting the encroachments of the Mughal power in the Deccan and even welcomed Shah Jahan, when, as a prince, the latter rebelled against his father and took refuge in the Deccan. In 1635 he accepted Mughal suzerainty. The Sultan grew jealous of his powerful minister, Amir Juma, who appealed to Aurangzib, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, in 1655, against his master. This furnished a pretext for Aurangzib to invade Golconda. Hyderabad was plundered and Abdulla made peace by paying all arrears of tribute. Abdulla was followed by his nephew, Abdul Hasan, also known as Tana Shah. He lost Golconda to Aurangzib who captured it after a protracted siege in 1687 and was made prisoner. With him ended the Qutb Shahi line.

### Ahmadnagar

The Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar was founded by Nizamu'l-Mulk, the minister who succeeded Mahmud Gawan. His able son, Malik Ahmad,

**Ahmadnagar** founded the city of Ahmadnagar. He also consolidated his position by taking the fortress of Daulatabad (1499). He died in 1508. "It is impossible," says Kincaid, "not to admire the great talents and high character of the founder of the house of

**Ahmad Nizam Shah** Ahmadnagar. Although of Brahman descent, he yet proved himself superior

to every Mussalman general against whom he fought. Although an absolute despot, he was continent and modest. Although himself the bravest of the brave, no king was ever more indulgent to the errors and even to the cowardice of his subordinates. It may be added that no Indian king, save Sivaji alone, was ever better served by his officers."\*

Ahmad Nizam Shah was succeeded by his son, Burhan Nizam Shah (1509-1553). He was defeated in a war with Bijapur in 1524, but later managed to

**Later rulers** win a victory over it and recover Sholapur and the neighbouring districts which had long been a bone of contention. He was converted to the Shiah faith by Shah Tahir; and this change of religion nearly cost him his kingdom. Husain Nizam Shah, his son, was

\* Kincaid: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, p. 89.

humiliated by a combination of the rulers of Vijayanagar and Bijapur with the Sultan of Golconda. He was besieged in his own capital, but was saved by dissensions among his enemies which ultimately brought about a combination of the Mussalman rulers against Vijayanagar. Husain took part in the battle of Talikota and brought about the capture, in the field of battle, of Rama Raya of Vijayanagar whom he caused to be beheaded. Husain died soon after this victory (1565).

The reign of his son, Murtaza Nizam Shah, witnessed the conquest and annexation of Berar. Murtaza became mad and was killed by his son. Then followed a period of utter confusion owing to intense party strife between the Deccanis and the foreigners. This confusion served as a pretext for interference in Ahmadnagar to Akbar who had sheltered Burhan Nizam Shah, the exiled brother of Murtaza. The later history of Ahmadnagar was one prolonged struggle against the Mughals. It received a rude shock in the time of Akbar. But even Akbar could not thoroughly subdue it. It was left to one of his successors, Shah Jahan, finally to annex it (1637).

### Bijapur

The annals of Bijapur and the Adil Shahi dynasty that ruled over it are of great interest to the student of Bahmani history. Bijapur stands on the crest of the watershed of the Deccan and Karnataka and is very healthy. It was the seat of a governorship under the Bahmanis. The founder of this line was Yusuf Adil Shah (1490-1510) whose history has been sketched in the previous section. Yusuf was a popular ruler ; he treated the Hindus with much consideration. He had great ability and admitted Hindus to offices of trust. He made Marathi the language of accounts and local business. He also built the fort and citadel of Bijapur. He endeavoured with considerable success to establish the Shiah faith against great opposition, in the course of which he was forced to flee for shelter to Berar. He made an attempt to recover Goa from the Portuguese who had by this time established themselves on the west coast of India, but

failed. His son, Ismail Adil Shah (1510-34), next came to the throne; and he followed the policy of his father. After him came Ibrahim Adil Shah I, whose vices and follies brought nothing but discredit to the Bijapur state. He restored the Sunni faith and made Persian the language of the administration. In his time there were party factions at Vijayanagar; and at the invitation of one of the parties, Ibrahim marched on that city and returned with large presents. He died in 1557. The next Sultan was Ali Adil Shah in whose time took place the epoch-making battle of Talikota (1565).

The events that led to this struggle are briefly as follows. Ali Adil Shah entered into an alliance with Rama Raya, the *de facto* ruler of Vijayanagar with the object of crushing the rival Sultanate of Ahmadnagar. In the course of this joint enterprise Rama Raya displayed such haughtiness against the Muslims of Ahmadnagar that even his ally, Ali Adil Shah, deserted him. Eventually all the four Sultans of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Bidar and Golconda united their forces and defeated Rama Raya near Talikota. The Raya was taken prisoner and beheaded. The result of the battle was the downfall of the great Hindu empire, a short account of which will be given in the next chapter. Bijapur and Golconda extended their boundaries considerably.

Now that the Muhammadan states understood the value of unity, they played the same game against the Portuguese whose occupation of Goa, a port of embarkation for Muslims proceeding to Mecca, was gall and wormwood to the Sultans. Bijapur and Ahmadnagar once again mustered their forces now before Goa. A ten-months' siege followed, but to no purpose. The Portuguese retained Goa.

Ali Adil Shah died in 1579—killed, it is believed, by a eunuch. This ruler tried to conquer the country to the south as far as Penukonda. He completed the walls of Bijapur and erected its spacious Jumma Mosque. With his



successor, Ibrahim Adil Shah, who continued the usual war with his neighbours and sent an embassy to Akbar in 1603, the separate history of both Ahmadnagar and Bijapur came to a close. It is believed that a secret treaty was made, by which Bijapur was to be protected and the Mughals were to be free to attack Ahmadnagar. Bijapur was left in peace by the Mughals in the reign of Akbar and in that of his son. Ibrahim Adil Shah died in 1626. He was, according to Meadows Taylor, "the greatest of all the Adil Shahi dynasty, and in most respects, except the founder, the most able and popular." He greatly improved the land-revenue and settlement and seems to have followed the system of Raja Todar Mal with the necessary modifications. Though a Sunni, he was very tolerant of all faiths and extensively employed Brahmans and Marathas in his service. He was friendly with the Portuguese of Goa and protected the Christian missionaries. He adorned his capital with many noble buildings. After his death, the importance of the dynasty closes; and the history of his successors should be traced in the history of the Mughal conquest of the Deccan. In 1686 it was definitely annexed by Aurangzeb.

### Conclusion

Writing about the character of the Bahmani dynasty, Dr. V. A. Smith says that it would be difficult to specify any definite benefit conferred on India by the dynasty. It has to be conceded that this opinion was not much of an exaggeration. The history of the Deccan Sultanates is a long tale of intrigue and wars, not relieved by many acts of real benevolence to the people consciously undertaken. Even judged by the standard of public morality prevailing in that age, the Hindus who formed the bulk of the population were treated most cruelly and oppressed beyond measure, and the peasantry were neglected and miserable. Wars of revenge involving wholesale slaughter of defenceless people, intrigues, palace revolutions and sectarian quarrels filled largely the pages of the history of this dynasty; yet a few silver lines seemed to have appeared amidst the clouded

**Moral and material progress under the Bahmanis**

political horizon surrounding the Deccan throughout this period. The ability displayed by the founder of the Bahmani line and the intelligent revenue administration of Mahmud Gawan, the murdered minister, are certainly little oases in an otherwise barren tract devoid of 'fruitful ideas or valuable institutions.' Meadows Taylor thus remarks on Bahmani rule:—"In respect to education, the Bahmani kings were liberal for their time. Mosques, often perhaps small and rude, were built in all the principal villages and market towns, and well endowed as part of the existing village system. To each a Moolla was appointed, who acted as schoolmaster and priest, while Kazies and higher officers of civil law superintended the whole; colleges existed at the chief cities, all richly endowed. Thus means of education were free to all who chose to learn Persian or Arabic; and in most of the Deccan villages the endowments still exist. The Hindoos, it may be presumed, were neither assisted nor interfered with and their literature was confined to the Sanskrit language and to its professors, the Brahmins. In the Telingana country, the example of the ancient Hindoo rulers in regard to irrigation works was followed in a liberal and spirited manner by the Mahomedans, and many of the noblest reservoirs now existing were built by them. On all these points, and in a general amelioration of manners, there is no question that the Mahomedan occupation of the Deccan during the existence of the great Bahmani dynasty had not been barren of good effects."\*

Irrigation works on a pretty large scale were undertaken, especially in Telingana; and this had the effect of increasing the crown revenue which was used to maintain large armies which 'were little better than armed mobs, eager to murder tens of thousands of helpless peasants, but extremely inefficient in warfare.' The lot of the common people was not at all good. A Russian merchant, Athanasius Nikitin, who travelled much in the Deccan between A.D. 1470 and 1474, bears ample testimony to the misery of the masses. "The land is overstocked with people; but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles

are extremely opulent and delight in luxury." \* *The jaziya*, a poll-tax on infidels, was levied and those who wanted to escape from it had to embrace Muhammadanism.

A few of the Deccani Sultans encouraged learning and science; but it was naturally the *mullah* that was patronised, not the *pandit*. Brahman institutions in the big cities and capital centres were either suppressed or languished for want of support, though the *pandit* carried knowledge to the safer corners of villages, which, as in days of yore, continued to live in a state of placid calmness. Higher education according to Muslim ideals received ample patronage at the hands of able ministers like Mahmud Gawan.

The Deccani Sultans were great builders. The mountain forts at Gawilgarh and Narnala are considered the best specimens of the grandeur of design appropriate to mountain fortresses, while the works at 'Ausa and Parenda are commended for the military science displayed in their trace.' Much of their military architecture was introduced directly from abroad. Several of their monuments like the College of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar and the Jami Masjid at Gulbarga were Persian in features. The Sultans enriched Gulbarga and Bidar with stately monuments. The Bijapur buildings of the Adil Shahi kings are the most remarkable and unequalled in India. One noteworthy tendency of the times was the growth of the chronicling spirit which found its best representative in Muhammad Kasim, surnamed Ferishta, who is a great, if not altogether trustworthy, authority for the period treated in this chapter.

\* Quoted by Dr. V. A. Smith : *Oxford History of India*, p. 298.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EMPIRE OF VIJAYANAGAR

We have seen that the great raid undertaken by Malik Kafur in the time of Alau'd-din Khilji had shaken the Hindu kingdoms of the Deccan to their very foundations. The subsequent tyranny of Muhammad bin Tughlak merely confirmed the worst fears the Hindu rulers of the south entertained in regard to Muslim activities. In the words of Robert Sewell, "everything seemed to be leading up to but one inevitable end—the ruin and devastation of the Hindu provinces, the annihilation of their old royal houses, the destruction of their religion, their temples and their cities. All that the dwellers in the south held most dear seemed tottering to its fall."\* From this catastrophe South India was saved by the energy and genius of five brothers, Harihara and Bukka and three younger ones. These were the sons of one Sangama; and probably they fled away from Warangal when it was besieged by the Muhammadans in 1323. According to tradition preserved in the pages of the chronicle of Nuniz, a European traveller, Muhammad bin Tughlak raised Harihara to the dignity of the chief of Anagundi, a strong fort on the northern bank of the Tungabhadra†. Finding his position insecure, Harihara together with his brother Bukka, then crossed the river and founded in 1336 a new city, and named it Vijayanagar.‡ The site selected for the new capital was an excellent one. In the words of an inscription "its rampart was Hemakuta, its moat the auspicious Tungabhadra, its guardian the world-

Origin of Vijayanagar

The City

\* Sewell: *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 5.

† *Ibid*, p. 7.

‡ Sewell supports this view. Dr. N. Venkataramaniah (*Vijayanagara, Origin of the City and Empire*, 1933) urges that Harihara and Bukka were ministers of the Raja of Kampili and were originally Telugu vassals of Warangal. After Kampili was defeated by Muhammed Tughlak, Harihara and Bukka established themselves in independence at Vijayanagar. On the other hand, Dr. S.

protector Virupaksha, its ruler the great king of kings, Harihara." \*

In this task the brothers were aided by their Guru Madhava or Vidyaranya who was anxious to preserve the Hindu Dharma in the south and who clearly perceived that the advent of the Muhammadans to the south of the Krishna meant disaster for Hindu culture. The establishment of Vijayanagar meant the restoration of Hindu religion and Dharma in South India.†

Harihara died in 1343 and the work of consolidating the new dominion fell to Bukka. Most of the Hindu states in the south willingly acknowledged the suzerainty of Bukka and he had therefore no difficulty in extending the kingdom from sea to sea. His greatest task, however, lay towards the north where the Bahmani Sultans had established their power. As has been narrated in the previous chapter, bloody wars were waged between the two powers, the rich and fertile Doab of Raichur being the bone of contention. ‡

Kumara Kampana, a son of Bukka, was successful in conquering the chiefs of the country round Conjeevaram

Krishnaswami Iyengar holds that Harihara and Bukka were Hoysala feudatories who succeeded to the remnants of the Hoysala kingdom after the extinction of the Hoysalas with their capital at Vijayanagar. Father Heras (*Beginnings of Vijayanagara History*, 1936) and Dr. Saletore (*Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, 1936) support this view. Some writers regard the rise of Vijayanagar as symbolic of a widespread Hindu assertion in which the Telugu and the Karnataka elements jointly took part.

\* See p. 342 of Part I, *A History of India*.

† The object of the two brothers in establishing the kingdom of Vijayanagar would appear to have been not only to prevent Muslim advance into the south, but to preserve the Hindu religion from attacks by the foreigners. "A body of learned men with the two famous brothers, Madhavacharya and Sayana, at their head, were, at the instance of Bukka himself, set to work upon the religion of the Vedas." There was another minister and general of Bukka, also by name Madhava who was described as "the establisher of the path of the Upanishads" See Introduction to *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, by A. R. Sarasvathi.

‡ Bukka I reigned from 1343 to 1377 A.D. and the three Bahmani Sultans of the period were Alau'd-din I, Muhammad I, and Mujahid (1347-1378.)

and in destroying the power of the Sultanate of Madura which had grown out of the governorship set up by Malik Kafur on his great invasion and which kept up a continuous warfare with the last Hoysala monarchs in the border region round Trichinopoly. Vira Ballala III, the last noted Hoysala ruler, perished in battle with the Mussalmans of Madura in 1342-43: and his successor quickly disappeared. It was on the ruins of the Hoysala power that the five brothers, sons of Sangama, established their independent rule: and it was to their heritage that they succeeded. Kampana reconsecrated the great temples of Srirangam and Madura and restored Hindu orthodoxy in the Tamil country. It was after the disappearance of the Madura Sultanate in 1377-8 A.D., that the Rayas of Vijayanagar could and did assume imperial titles.\*

Harihara succeeded Bukka; and he was the first to assume the title of *Maharajadhiraj* (1377-1404). The

**Harihara II**

Bahmani Sultan of his time, Muhammad Shah, was a man of peace and this left time for Harihara to complete the work of his predecessors so far as South India was concerned. Mysore, Dharwar, Conjeevaram, Chingleput and Trichinopoly were included in his dominions. As we saw, the Pandya country of Madura was conquered by his generals; and it was restored to the old Pandya line of rulers. Early in his reign Harihara expelled the Muhammadans from Goa. His chief minister was the scholar Sayana, the author of a famous commentary on the Vedas. Though a Saiva—he worshipped Siva under the form of Virupaksha—the Raya was tolerant towards other forms of worship. The rash act of Harihara's son in undertaking a sudden invasion of the Doab and the disastrous consequences that followed have already been stated in connection with the reign of Firuz, the Bahmani Sultan. Harihara II died in August 1404. His eldest son, Bukka II (1404-6) had only a short rule.

The next to obtain the throne was Deva Raya I (1406-1422 A.D.) whose mad love for Nihal of Mudkal†

\* S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar: *South India and Her Mussalman Invaders*, pp. 170-183.

† Ferishta gives her the name of Patal.

brought about a great war between Deva Raya and Firuz Shah Bahmani. The war ended in bitter humiliation for the Vijayanagar king who had, according to one version, to give his daughter in marriage to the Muslim Sultan and cede Bankapur as dowry\*. This marriage alliance did not bring permanent peace between the two warring states. There was again war in 1417 between the two states, in which Deva Raya was successful.

Vira Vijaya, the next monarch (1422-4), was not the weak ruler that he was represented to have been. He had his son, Deva Raya II, probably as co-ruler with him; and both had to face a bitter war made by Sultan Ahmad Shah who overran the country round the capital and besieged Vijayanagar. The Muhammadan invader marked his advance by considerable destruction and slaughter and got away with an immense tribute. Deva Raya II had a fairly long reign till at least 1446 A.D. He had to repel a Bahmani invasion made in 1435, as a result of which he entertained a large number of Muhammadan soldiers in his service and allowed them complete liberty of worship.

His reign is important as Vijayanagar was then visited by the Italian, Nicolo Conti and the Persian, Abdur Razzak, a native of Herat. Both of them have left valuable records from which mainly all our knowledge about Vijayanagar and its king is derived.

Nicolo Conti visited Vijayanagar just after the accession of Deva Raya II. He admired the city very much and estimated its circumference to be sixty miles. What struck his imagination was the prevalence of polygamy which permitted a man to marry many wives and the institution of *sati* which was terribly prevalent in the empire. "Their king

\* As we saw already, this fact is disputed. The story of his having had to give his daughter to Firuz is not substantiated by the known inscriptions of the reign.

See *The Mysore Gazetteer*—Revised Edition—Vol. II, Part III, p. 1549.

is more powerful than all the other kings of India. He takes to himself 12,000 wives, of whom 4,000 follow him on foot wherever he may go and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horseback. The remainder are carried by men in litters, of whom 2,000 or 3,000 are selected as his wives on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him." The Italian traveller also gives us a good description of the many festivals that were held and the superstitious practices connected therewith, such as hook-swinging. He writes about the diamond mines of Golconda, the coinage and currencies of the country, and the peculiar engines of warfare. Slavery was prevalent, many of the slaves being insolvent debtors. The army is said to have numbered a million men and more.

Twenty years later, Abdur Razzak visited the court of Deva Raya. He was an ambassador from Persia to the courts of the Zamorin of Calicut and Abdur Razzak Deva Raya. He has left a detailed account of the city, its forts and fortifications, its buildings and bazaars, and its splendour and riches. "The city of Bidjanagar," writes Razzak, "is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world." The same authority narrates an incident in the time of Deva Raya which goes to prove that the shedding of innocent blood was not only the pastime of some of the Bahmani Sultans, but that it was indulged in by a few of the Hindu princes as well. This story of Razzak relates that a brother of Deva Raya made a desperate attempt on the life of the king with a view to usurp the throne himself (1442-3).\*

\* He built a new house to which he invited the king and the principal nobles of the empire. The latter came one by one; and as they entered the reception hall they were butchered into fragments by hirelings kept concealed, the weird sounds of trumpets and flutes preventing the noise of possible struggle against the murderers from being heard outside the hall. The king was then invited to come; but he pleaded inability owing to ill-health. The infuriated brother then gave him a sword-thrust from which he fainted. When, however, the unnatural brother proclaimed himself king, Deva Raya, who had recovered consciousness, shrieked out an order



There was another Bahmani invasion in 1443 A.D. soon after the attempt on the Raya's life; and in the war that followed, the Raya lost his eldest son. An invasion of Ceylon is also mentioned about this time, which was probably a re-conquest of the northern part of the island already secured in the previous century. In this reign Kannada literature was greatly encouraged; and poets and writers like Kumara Vyasa, the author of a Kannada *Bharath*, flourished. The Lingayat creed was highly favoured by the king who was however tolerant of other faiths. Foreign trade was well developed; and the capital consumed large quantities of rubies from Pegu, silks from China and cinnabar, camphor, musk, pepper and sandal from Malabar.

Little can be gathered of the reigns of Deva Raya's successors, Mallikarjuna and Virupaksha. After them came the rule of a few weaklings. Referring to this time, says Sewell: "The period was without doubt a troublous one, and all that can be definitely and safely stated at present is that for about forty years prior to the usurpation of Narasimha, the kingdom passed from one hand to the other, in the midst of much political agitation, discontent and widespread antagonism to the representatives of the old royal family, several of whom appear to have met with violent deaths."\*

There was a combined invasion of Vijayanagar by the Bahmani Sultan and the Gajapati king of Orissa, on two occasions, once soon after the accession of Mallikarjuna and again in 1462. The Gajapati advanced along the east coast in the direction of Kanchi in 1462 and caused great commotion. Goa was captured by the Bahmani Sultan in 1469 and could not be recovered though several expeditions were made to recapture it. There was a terrible famine in the to kill his brother, the author of the carnage. The astonished guards immediately caught hold of him and hacked him to pieces. Read Abdur Razzak's account as given in the *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Part III, pp 1574-8; and Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, 103 *et seq.*

\* Sewell: *A Forgotten Empire*, pp. 97-8.

land which raged for two years; and in the confusion caused by it the Bahmani forces completed their conquest of Telingana. The Bahmani Sultan led a sudden expedition to Kanchi and sacked it in 1481, in spite of the resistance of Saluva Narasimha. But this is considered improbable by some. In the reign of Virupaksha there prevailed a great amount of confusion which had already begun to manifest itself even in the reign of Mallikarjuna. There is considerable uncertainty as to the exact relationship of these last two sovereigns of the Sangama dynasty.

This usurpation took place between 1485 and 1486 A.D.\* Narasinga Saluva, who deposed the last link of the

**The First Usur-** first dynasty, was a powerful chief of  
**pation (1485.6)** Chandragiri. The nobles of the empire, finding in him ability and statesmanship, elected him as the king. He soon justified their choice by undertaking extensive conquests in the south which showed a tendency to break away from Vijayanagar and to guard the integrity of the empire against the Gajapatis and the Bahmanis during the time of the last feeble rulers of the first dynasty. He is said to have crossed the Kaveri when in flood, defeated its ruler and founded Seringapatam. His conquests extended over the bulk of South India.

Saluva Narasinga became the master of all the country from Karnata to Telingana, extending along the coast as far as Masulipatam. He quickly conquered Kanchi, the old Hoysala country, and the forts of Udayagiri and Penukonda; and his inscriptions are found over all the central and eastern parts of the Vijayanagar kingdom. He was a great patron of letters; and the *Jaimini Bharatam* was dedicated to him. He attained to sovereign power in 1486 and lived till 1497-8 A.D.

Narasinga Saluva was succeeded by his son, Immadi Narasinga, who was soon deprived of all power by his general, Narasa Nayaka, a Tuluva. This  
**The Second** is known as the second usurpation.  
**Usurpation** Narasa Nayaka had helped his master's usurpation; and after the latter's death, began to usurp

\* See p. 47, *A Little Known Chapter of Vijayanagar History*, by S. K. Aiyangar.

and exercise all the royal powers. His name was always coupled with that of the sovereign in grants; and he was the real sovereign till his death in 1503 A.D. Immadi Narasinga is believed by some to have continued to live on as the *roi faincant* for a few years after him and died in 1506. It was now that the famous Italian traveller, Varthema, visited the land. He has given a very interesting description of the capital which was a large city, seven miles in circumference and having a triple circlet of walls; the magnificence and wealth of the city were not at all affected by the revolutions in the government.

Vira Narasimha, a son of Narasa Nayaka, succeeded to his power and to the throne as well, on the death of Immadi Narasinga. The Saluva dynasty became now extinct and the Tuluva usurpation was thus really completed. Narasa Nayaka (ruler from 1498 to 1503) was a vigorous, energetic and ambitious king and patron of letters. Vira Narasimha ruled till his death in 1509. A story is told that, shortly before his death, he tried to encompass the death of his younger brother, Krishnadeva Raya, of whom he was greatly jealous.

The dynasty started by Narasa has left a great name behind it: and its best and greatest representative was Krishnadeva Raya (1509-29). We have a number of authorities for an account of his career. Besides purely European accounts such as those of Nuniz and Domingo Paes, we have the Telugu works, the *Rayavachakam*, *Krishna Deva Raya Vijayam*, *Parijatapaharanam*, *Manucharitra*, *Amuktamalyada* containing a number of political maxims and the *Rayavamsavali*, dealing with his exploits. The first task of this able sovereign was to restore order in, and improve the finances of, the empire. He next subdued the forest chiefs in the middle region and proceeded against the rebel Raja of Ummattur. He captured the strong fortresses of Sivasamudram and Seringapatam. In 1513 he marched against Udayagiri, (Nellore District) and reduced it. Krishnadeva Raya next proceeded against Kondavid, a strong hill-fortress in the possession of the king of Orissa who had

brought under his sway the whole of the east coast since 1154, and reduced it. Advancing thence to Kondapelli he took it after a three months' siege. Peace was made shortly after and Krishnadeva Raya married an Orissan princess. Thus he brought the whole of the eastern dominions under his complete subjection. Westwards, the conquests of Krishnadeva Raya extended as far as Salsette. But the greatest achievement of the sovereign was the recovery of the much-disputed fortresses, Raichur and Mudkal.

With an army of one million men divided into eleven divisions, Krishnadeva Raya advanced towards Raichur (May, 1520). Similarly, Adil Shah of Bijapur advanced with a large force, crossed the river and lay entrenched within nine miles of Raichur. The advancing Hindu forces were at first routed by the Muslims. But Krishnadeva Raya rallied and ordered the remaining columns to advance bravely. His personal bravery inspired the soldiers to fresh efforts and in the end the Muslim forces were scattered. Raichur was next captured by Krishnadeva Raya. The success of the Hindus was in a great measure due to the assistance rendered by the Portuguese soldiers who were able to make breaches in the stone walls of Raichur and pick off with their arquebuses the defenders from the walls. Subsequently Krishnadeva entered the Bijapur territory and razed to the ground the fortress of Gulbarga.

This battle of Raichur had far reaching effects. It so weakened the power and prestige of Adil Shah that 'he ceased altogether to dream of any present conquest in the south and turned his attention to cementing alliances with the other Muhammadan sovereigns.' It also led to the subsequent combination of the Muslim forces of the Deccan which brought about the ruin of the empire. The Hindus were puffed up with pride and arrogance which accelerated their downfall. It indirectly affected the fortunes of the Portuguese whose prosperity depended on their trade with Vijayanagar; for they never liked the

Sultanates of the Deccan. With the downfall of Vijayanagar, the Portuguese power began to decay.

The direct rule of Krishnadeva Raya extended over the whole of South India, *i.e.*, the Madras Presidency with all the Indian States (including Mysore, Travancore and Cochin). Here is a pen picture of this great and mighty sovereign by the Portuguese chronicler, Paes :—" This king is of medium height and of fair complexion and good figure, rather fat than thin.....He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry : he is one that seeks to honour foreigners.....He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage....." To this we may add that Krishnadeva Raya was a great patron of Sanskrit and Telugu literature. In his court flourished the *Ashta-dig-gujas* or eight distinguished poets of whom Alasani Peddanna, author of the *Manucharita*, was the best known. He was a great builder and endowed many temples with liberal grants. He died in 1529.

The chief minister of the king was Saluva Thimma who had also served his father and brother. The king looked upon him as his father; and he was the chief minister, governor of Kondavidu and military leader. He took part in all the wars of the reign and settled the government of the Kondavidu country. He was commonly known in his own days and to succeeding generations as Appuji (Appa or Father).

Paes has left a narrative of the country, the people, the king, his court and methods of administration and his nobles and his palace and many other features of popular life.\* His account is an intimate one and displays a settled and orderly administration and a great, populous and wealthy city. The account of Nuniz is more historical than descriptive of the country and the city of Vijayanagar. He

\* R. Sewell: *A Forgotten Empire* (Reprint, 1924)—Narrative of Domingo Paes, pp. 236-90.—The Chronicle of Fernao Nuniz, pp.291-395, *ibid.*

gives a graphic account of the camp of Krishnadeva Raya on his advance to Raichur. His account was written some years after the death of the Raya. The Raya greatly beautified his capital. Among his buildings are the very fine Vittalaśwami and Hazira Ramaswami temples and also the new town of Nagalapur identified with modern Hospet.

This warrior king was succeeded by a brother—Achyuta Raya (1529-42 A.D.). Even at the commencement of his reign, Adil Shah of Bijapur took the fortresses of Raichur and Mudkal for which his predecessor had staked everything. The king himself was of a violent temper and soon alienated his best friends. "His conduct and mode of government," says Sewell, "ruined the Hindu cause in Southern India and opened the whole country to the invader though he did not himself live to see the end." According to Nuniz, Adil Shah visited Vijayanagar about 1536 "at the requisition of Roy," thus leaving us to infer that there were factions in the city and that the king was so desperate as to invite the mortal enemy of his own house to help him. Achyuta Raya undertook a campaign against Tiruvadi (modern South Travancore and Tinnevely); and the army pushed on to Trivandrum. Visvanatha Nayak, son of Nagama Nayak, and the founder of the Madura Nayak dynasty took a prominent part in this campaign. The Orissa ruler invaded the country to the south of the Krishna. Achyuta was a great patron of temples and Brahmans, and an ardent follower of the Sri Vaishnava faith. His court poet was Rajanatha Dindima who wrote a work of considerable historical interest about his royal master, known as the *Achyutharāyābhyaudayam*. King Achyutha died in 1542 and was succeeded, after some trouble, by his brother's son, Sadasiva (1542-70).

Sadasiva Raya was king only in name; the real power was exercised by his minister, Rama Raya, along with his brothers, Tirumala and Venkatadri. Rama Raya was of a family which had long been associated with the state administration and was the son of a minister of Krishnadeva Raya and the great king's son-in-law as well. He saved Sadasiva from his opponents and had him crowned king.

He then assumed the position of protector of the young king. He was regent till about 1550 when he put the king under restraint and claimed an equal status with him. After 1563 he actually assumed imperial titles; and the name of Sadasiva ceased even to be mentioned in grants. This reign witnessed the beginning of the decline of Vijayanagar. The real cause of the disaster which befell the Hindu kingdom was the latter's active interference in the confused politics of the Deccan Sultanates. In 1543 the headstrong minister, Rama Raya, entered into an alliance with Ahmadnagar and Golconda against Bijapur which was playing the leading *role* in the Deccan affairs. Bijapur was, however, saved by its able minister, Asad Khan. Again, in 1558, Vijayanagar entered into an alliance with Bijapur, its former enemy, against Ahmadnagar. Ferishta thus describes the cruelties perpetrated by Rama Raya's forces in the course of this war:—"Ali Adil Shah having called Rama Raya to his assistance, they in concert divided the dominions of Husain Nizam Shah and laid them waste in such a manner that from Purendah to Joonere, and from Ahmadnagar to Doulatabad, not a vestige of population was left. The infidels of Vijayanagar, who for many years had been wishing for such an event, left no cruelty unpractised. They insulted the honour of the Mussalman women, destroyed the mosques and did not even respect the sacred Koran."\* The barbarous activities of Rama Raya's forces, combined with his own insolence towards his Muhammadan ally, eventually led to the combination of all the Deccan Sultans, who were resolved on a war of extermination against the Hindus.

The Sultans  
combine

Battle of Tali-  
kot or Rakhas  
Tagdi; 1565

The combined forces of the Sultans, except those of the Berar ruler, moved south on Monday, December 25, 1564 A.D. and reached the neighbourhood of the Krishna near the small fortress of Talikota. News of this eventful march quickly reached Vijayanagar where the utmost confidence prevailed. The *de facto* ruler, Rama Raya, exhibited indifference to the movements of his

enemies. However, he collected a vast force from the various provinces of the empire and moved on, along with his brothers, Tirumala and Venkatadri. On January 23, 1565, the two forces met at Rakhas Tagdi, some miles south of the Krishna and a pitched battle was fought. The two brothers, Tirumala and Venkatadri, occupied the left and the right wings of the army, while Rama Raya was commanding in the centre. Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur was facing Tirumala and the Ahmadnagar Sultan was ranged against Rama Raya. A large contingent of archers covered up the Mussalman front, carefully concealing their heavy artillery. When the attack began, the archers fell back and the artillery opened fire with murderous effect. Rama Raya—now a very old man—insisted on his personally superintending the operations. When the battle became general, it was evident that the Muhammadans would be thrown back. But the unexpected happened and the destiny of a big empire hung in the balance. The front rank of the Muslim forces in a fit of despair fired shots at close quarters, charged with bags of copper money. This had a deadly effect; all on a sudden, an elephant belonging to Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar, mad with the excitement of the battle, suddenly rushed forward exactly towards the spot where the aged warrior, Rama Raya, was viewing the scene from a litter. Before he could effect his escape, he was taken prisoner. Taken to the camp of Nizam Shah, he was forthwith decapitated. Seeing that their chief was dead, the Vijayanagar forces broke up and fled.

Rama Raya  
killed

What followed may be described in a few words. Though vanquished, hopes were still entertained by the Hindus that the city would be safe. But fugitives from Talikota gave the information that the army would soon reach the city gates. There was panic within the splendid and populous capital. The cowardly princes of the royal family removed as much of the jewellery and gold as could be carried on the backs of the available elephants. The puppet king, Sadasiva Raya, was conducted safely to the south

Fall of the city of  
Vijayanagar



by Tirumala. The defenceless city was abandoned to the tender mercies of the Muslims. They came and slew the wretched population—men, women and children. The city was wiped out.\* Nothing now remains in the once glorious city of Vijayanagar except buildings in various stages of dilapidation; and even these are only tenanted by wild beasts.

We may now briefly note the political results of the battle of Talikota. In the first place, it shattered to pieces the big empire and opened the flood gates of Muslim invasion into Peninsular India. Secondly, it directly led to the expansion of both Bijapur and Golconda which now annexed large portions of the now destroyed empire and encroached into South India. Thirdly, many of the distant viceroys of the Hindu empire established their independence, the most important of them being the Nayaks of Madura. Fourthly, we find the beginnings of a great Mysore kingdom which rose on the ruins of Vijayanagar. Lastly, the fall of Vijayanagar led to the collapse of the Portuguese power in India †

\* Father Heras, in this *Aravidu Dynasty* (1927), controverts the statement of Ferishta that the Muslim sovereigns wiped out the city of Vijayanagar. His reasons are: (1) the Muslim kings stayed at the city for six months with the possible idea of retaining the place for themselves; and (2) the Muslims were probably responsible for not a few stately buildings constructed by them with mortar and in a style different from the old Vijayanagar style. We wish that he is right and Ferishta wrong. But more convincing arguments are required to remove the stigma of vandalism which history has laid at the door of the four Sultans who compelled Tirumala and Sadasiva to abandon their beloved capital and leave it to the tender mercies of the iconoclasts and the Bedars of the Portuguese chronicles—See Heras: *The Aravidu Dynasty*, pp. 218-30.

† Referring to this, Couto, a Portuguese, remarks:—“By this destruction of the kingdom of Vijayanagar, India and our State were much shaken; for the bulk of the trade undertaken by all was for this kingdom to which they carried horses, velvets, satins, and other sorts of merchandise, by which they made great profits; and the Custom House of Goa suffered much in its revenue, so that from that day till now the inhabitants of Goa began to live less well; for baizes and fine cloths were a trade of great importance for Persia and Portugal, and it then languished, and the gold pagodas, of which every year more than 500,000 were laden in the ships of the kingdom, were then worth 7½ tangas and to-day are worth 11½ and similarly every kind of coin.”—Quoted by Sewell in his ‘*A Forgotten Empire*’ (1900), p. 210.

It was to Penukonda that Tirumala, brother of Rama Raya took the puppet king, Sadasiva ; and there he usurped the throne himself and founded the last dynasty of the Rayas. This is the Third Usurpation. According to Sewell, Sadasiva was murdered by Tirumala.\* The new king, Tirumala, had to meet once again a Muhammadan invasion which he succeeded in beating off. Tirumala was as much a scholar as a general.†

Tirumala was succeeded in 1575 by his second son, Sri Ranga, while his other sons, Rama and Venkatapati, were appointed viceroys of Seringapatam and Madura respectively. The head-quarters of Venkatapati were at Chandragiri. In this reign Penukonda had to stand another siege by the Golconda Sultan. Sri Ranga was taken prisoner by the Sultan and all the territory north of Penukonda passed on to the Muhammadans (1579-80). One result of this war was that the capital of the rapidly-dwindling empire was once again changed to Chandragiri.

Sri Ranga died in 1586 and he was succeeded by Venkatapati who ruled from 1586 to 1614 with Chandragiri as his capital. This reign witnessed the crumbling of the empire ; there were defections everywhere ; the viceroyalty of Madura practically became independent while a similar movement existed at Seringapatam. A chieftain of Mysore, Raja Wodeyar, attached Seringapatam and captured it. Venkatapati was too weak to prevent it and had therefore to confirm Raja Wodeyar in the possession of the viceroyalty. He, however, succeeded in exercising his authority over the southern provinces.

After the death of Venkatapati in 1614, his adopted son, Sri Ranga II, ascended the throne. The decay of the empire was now complete ; two parties in the empire contended for power, the loyalists and the traitors. One Jagga Raya, belonging to

\* Apparently Dr. Smith dismisses this view as incorrect.

† *Sources of Vijayanagar History*: Introduction, by Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, p. 19.

the latter party, massacred all the members of the royal family. One child, however, escaped out of the carnage and at the instance of a loyal chief, Yachama Nayaka, the child was taken to Tanjore for protection. Its *de facto* ruler, Raghunatha, not only gave shelter to the royal refugee, but met Jagga Raya in battle (battle of Topur) and killed him. The result of this struggle was "that the imperial fugitive was raised to the throne as Rama II."\* The Muhammadans were not slow to take advantage of such a confusion: and they began to harass the more northern parts of the kingdom. At the same time it was found necessary to change the imperial capital from Chandragiri to Vellore. The name of a loyal chieftain who helped Rama II must be recorded. He

**Troublous times** was Chenna, the brother-in-law of Yachama Nayaka, who saved Rama II in his infancy. A half brother of Chenna, known as Ayyappa, built the town of Madras, interposing "this town between the Portuguese at Mylapore and the Dutch at Pulikat to prevent their constant quarrels."† The town itself was called Chennapatnam in the name of his father.

Rama's successor was Sri Ranga in whose time Chikka-deva Raya of Mysore (died 1704) absorbed much of what remained of the old Vijayanagar empire

**Sri Ranga** Sri Ranga disappeared from history after the Mysore successes. A nephew of this last king, Kodanda Rama, defeated the Raja of Mysore at Hassan in Mysore. Nothing more is known about the successors of Sri Ranga. In the eighteenth century his descendants were in possession of their old family estate, Anegundi, as a fief from the Mughals. The Marathas seized it in 1749.

Among those who took a leading part in the dismemberment of the Vijayanagar empire, the Marathas were the foremost. The southern invasions of the

**Last Days** Bijapur Sultans were entrusted to their Maratha commander, Shahaji, the father of the famous Sivaji. "Sivaji conquered all the Konkan country by 1675

\* *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, p. 21.

† *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, p. 21.

and four years later he had overthrown the last shreds of Vijayanagar authority in Kurnool, Gingi and Vellore; while his brother, Ekoji, had already, in 1674, captured Tanjore, and established a dynasty there which lasted for a century.”\*

For the history of Vijayanagar we have ample materials out of which a good account of the administrative system of the empire can be written.

#### Administration

But it is not possible in this little book to go into the subject at length. The big empire was divided into provinces,\* not unlike the *sarkars* of Mughal days. Dr. Smith estimates the number of districts to be two hundred. These provinces were in charge of governors who were *de facto* sovereigns in their respective areas. They paid a fixed revenue to the state and, besides, undertook to furnish troops when called upon to do so. Justice was administered according to local custom and no hardship seemed to have been felt by the inhabitants. The village *panchayats* continued to function as in days of yore. Land was the chief source of the royal revenue. The statement of Nuniz that the peasantry paid nine-tenths of their gross produce was a mistake. Rent was collected in money and payment in kind was expressly forbidden, at any rate in the days of Harihara I. The criminal code was not severe; but the method of punishment in some cases was cruel and almost barbarous. The practice of duelling was very common, but a special license had to be obtained from the ministers for conducting it. The Vijayanagar kings maintained an army on the Mauryan scale, necessitated no doubt by the presence of ambitious Sultans on the northern frontier. V. A. Smith is of opinion that the army as an organized force was inefficient.

The Vijayanagar kings were great patrons of Samskrit and Telugu literature. Krishnadeva Raya, himself a poet,

#### Art and Literature

was called the ‘Andhra Bhoja’ as he occupied the same place in Telugu literature as King Bhoja in Samskrit. In his court there flourished the *Ashta-dig-gajas*, or the eight

\* *Oxford History of India*, p. 311.

poets, the most famous of whom was Alasani Peddana. In the section on Dravidian literature, a summary of his charming *Manucharitra* has already been given. Nandi Timmana was another great poet of the times; and he was the author of the *Parijatapaharana* in which is 'recorded the story of Sri Krishna procuring the *parijata* flower from the garden of Indra through the sage Narada for his consort Rukmini.' According to a writer\* that famous master of practical jokes, Tenali Ramakrishna, or merely Tenali Raman as he is affectionately called by the Tamils, was one of the *Ashta-dig-gajas* in the court of Krishnadeva Raya. The wit is regarded as having lived in the time of Venkata I, according to the authority of H. Krishna Sastri. Considerably later flourished Appayadikshita, a Tamil Brahman, and a great philosopher.

The Vijayanagar sovereigns exhibited considerable originality in their buildings. 'They evolved a distinct school of architecture which used the most difficult material with success and were served by a brilliant company of sculptors and painters.'† The stately buildings of Madura which still stand represent the style adopted by the Nayak kings of Madura who were originally viceroys under the empire.

No survey of the history of Vijayanagar is complete without an account of the Nayak rule in the South. In the palmy days of the Vijayanagar Empire, the distant provinces were governed by viceroys called Nayaks who enjoyed in their respective jurisdictions almost independent authority, though they were careful from time to time to demonstrate their loyalty to the central power. But after the fateful battle of Talikota or Rakhas-Tagdi, these Nayak chiefs converted their viceroalties into independent states. Tirumala Nayak of Madura (1623-59) was the earliest to do

\* Kavali Venkataramaswami: *Biographies of the Dekhan Poets*, p. 88.

† *Oxford History of India*, p. 311.

so and his example was speedily followed by the Nayak chiefs of Tanjore, Gingi and Ikkeri.\*

Gingi was very important in the days of the Vijayanagar empire. In the time of Sadasiva Raya (1542-67), governors were regularly sent to Gingi to administer the surrounding areas. It possessed what was considered to be an impregnable fortress. Under Sadasiva, the Nayaks of Gingi showed no signs of insubordination. But after Talikota, they practically threw off the yoke, though they pretended to obey the central power at Penukonda. The Nayaks of Gingi ceased to do even this, after the rule of Venkatapathi (1614). The most prominent of them was Krishnappa of whom a good account is given by a Jesuit traveller. King Ranga in 1640 marched against Gingi and attempted to subdue it. But Tirumala of Madura, apprehensive of the fate of the other Nayaks, called in the aid of the Golconda Sultan. Thus Gingi escaped from being captured by Ranga. But it fell from the frying pan into the fire. For the Golconda ruler coveted it for himself; and he promptly invested it. To escape this new danger, the resourceful Tirumala sought the aid of a rival Sultan, the king of Bijapur. History again repeated itself. The two Muhammadan Sultans saw the folly of attacking each other. They united their forces against the Hindu Nayaks. Eventually Gingi was taken possession of by the Bijapur Sultan and tribute was exacted from the Nayaks of Tanjore and Madura.

Very obscure is the origin of the Ikkeri Nayaks. In the year 1560 a Lingayat of the Mallavar caste obtained

\* The history of the Nayaks forms an important episode in the general history of India. A mine of information is available on the subject and indeed the literature on the subject is growing. Mr. R. Sathyanatha Aiyar's *The Nayaks of Madura* is an important publication which the student intending to specialise may consult. Prof. V. Rangacharya's articles on the Nayak Rule at Madura will be highly useful. 'Chapters VII and VIII in Heras' *Aravidu Dynasty* represent a great advance on the subject. He has used materials not hitherto available to scholars. Mr. C. S. Srinivasachari's *History of Gingee* (1912) throws light on the obscure history of the Gingi Nayaks. *The South Canara Manual* briefly sums up the achievements of the Ikkeri Nayaks. Consult also Dr. N. Venkataramaniah : *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar* and Mr. Vriddhagirisan : *Nayaks of Tanjore*.

from Sadasiva Raya a grant of the government of Barkur and Mangalore. He was known as Sadasiva Nayak. He continued to pay tribute to Vijayanagar till the time of the battle of Talikota. After that event, the local Jain chiefs asserted their independence. They particularly hated to be ruled by Lingayats. In the war that followed, the Nayaks worsted and almost exterminated the Jains. One Venkatappa Nayak established himself at Ikkeri. By 1618 his dynasty consolidated its position. In 1646 the capital was shifted to Bednore, twenty miles south. Sivappa Nayak overran the southern parts of South Kanara (1649). The Nayaks still further strengthened themselves by the building of regular forts and fortresses in their little state. The Nayak rule at Bednore was very strong. An Italian traveller, Della Valle, testifies to the exceptionally strong and good government of the Bednore dynasty. Haidar Ali of Mysore defeated the Ikkeri chiefs in 1760 and captured almost all their fortresses.

The Tanjore Nayakship was founded probably in the year 1541.\* Its founder was Sevvappa Nayaka, who had married the sister of the wife of Achyuta Raya. He obtained from this emperor the viceroyalty of Tanjore as the *stridhana* or dowry of his bride. His reign lasted a considerable time. He is remembered for his great works of public utility. Chief among them were the big tank outside the Tanjore fort intended for the supply of good water for the people and the new Sivaganga fort of Tanjore. He also enlarged many temples, including those at Tiruvannamala and Vriddhachalam. He appears to have been tolerant of other faiths. His granting of a piece of land for the maintenance of fakirs is an instance in point. He also favoured the Portuguese who, in his time, settled in large numbers at Negapatam.

He was succeeded by his son, Achyuta Nayaka (1577 ?), who was served by a famous minister, Govinda Dikshita, a learned Kannada Brahman. Achyuta himself was a generous patron of arts and letters.

\* See Heras: *The Aravidu Dynasty*, p. 173.

Achyuta was succeeded by one of his sons, Raghu-natha, in whose time the Nayaks of Tanjore freed themselves from the control of Vijayanagar. Tanjore after Talikota contrived to have an independent existence. But the Nayaks spent their time in undertaking ambitious military projects which at one time brought the Bijapur Sultan to the Tanjore frontier. The Sultan also exacted tribute from the Nayak. But it was the constant feud with the neighbouring Madura principality that brought the Tanjore Nayak dynasty to a miserable and about 1673, Eventually the Marathas took possession of Tanjore.

More glorious was the rule of the Nayaks of Madura. The first ruler of this dynasty was Visvanatha Nayak, son of Nagama Nayak, who was, after Chandra Sekhara Pandya's death, appointed by Achyuta to be real ruler of Madura, subject to the empire.\* Visvanatha had the good

The Madura  
Nayaks

fortune to be served by an able minister, Arianatha Mudali, who organised the 'Poligar system.' According to this

system, the Madura country was divided into *palaiyams* or counties with a view to the proper administration of the country. "These Palaiyams were held in military tenure and the Palaiyakaran, or Poligar as he was afterwards called, was responsible for the defence of each of the seventy-two bastions of the Madura fort."† Visvanatha made the kingdom of Tiruvadi (South Travancore) tributary to himself and enlarged and improved the town of Tinnevely. He was the master of the whole of the Pandyan kingdom and a portion of the Chola territory; and his feudal organisation was a practical solution of the difficulties he had to face. He was followed by Krishnappa Nayak (1564-72) and then by Virappa Nayak (1572-95). After a few rulers there came the famous Tirumala Nayak (1623-59) in whose time Madura became independent. Tirumala was

\* Heras : *The Aravidu Dynasty*, p. 132. The Rev. H. Heras thinks that the foundation of the Madura Nayakship dates from the last year of Achyuta Raya, i.e., 1542 A.D.—1558.9 A.D. is the date assigned for this event by Nelson, Sewell and others. Satyanatha Iyer (*History of the Nayaks of Madura*) would ascribe the foundation of the dynasty to the close of the reign of Krishna-devaraya.

† Heras : *The Aravidu Dynasty*, p. 133.



ably served by a general, Ramappayya. At the time of his death, his territories included the modern districts of Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevely, Coimbatore, Salem, Trichinopoly, Pudukottai and part of Travancore.\* Tirumala won undying fame by the magnificent buildings he erected in his capital city. Most of these can be seen even to-day and they continue to excite the admiration of foreign visitors who seldom fail to see Madura in the course of their Indian tours. Mention must next be made of Queen Mangammal (1689-1706) who acted as regent to a posthumous son of Ranga, Krishna Muttu Virappa (1682-89). Mangammal was the mother of Muttu Virappa. A very popular queen, she is still remembered for her roads and avenues, her temples, tanks and choultries. She regained for Madura much of the position she held in the days of Tirumala; but notwithstanding her abilities, disintegrating tendencies had already set in. The Muhammadan power was penetrating deeper into the south; and Mysore, ever growing stronger, threatened to engulf the Nayak dynasties. The Poligar system organised in the days of Visvanatha had outlived its usefulness. The custom of engaging mercenaries proved to be a bane. The Nayaks had neglected the navy and much of the trade of the country had passed into the hands of the Dutch and the Portuguese whose missionary activities largely spread in the country under the direction of famous priests like Nobili and Beschi. Added to this, there was a series of succession quarrels which weakened the power of the Nayaks for resistance. This disintegration was complete in the time of Queen Minakshi (1731-36). By force and guile, Chanda Sahib imprisoned Minakshi and proclaimed himself ruler of the kingdom.†

\* *The Madura Gazetteer*, p. 47.

† See *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, p. 258: and *The Madura Gazetteer*, p. 58.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RAJPUTS AND THEIR HISTORY TILL THE TIME OF AKBAR—HINDU RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

#### SECTION I. THE POLITICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE RAJPUT STATES

At the time of the invasions of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Rajput dynasties were in possession of all the important states of Northern India. The conquests of the invading hordes had, by the date of the death of Muhammad Ghori, extended over all the fairest parts of Hindustan; and "the remains of Rajput independence were preserved on the table-land in the centre of Hindustan and the sandy tract stretching west from it to the Indus." \* Thus Mewat, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand, being rough and hilly, though contiguous to the valley of the Jumna, were very difficult to subdue for the Muhammadans; the Rajput tribes of these regions were often turbulent; and their strong forts of Rantambhor, Gwalior and Kalanjar had often to be taken and retaken. The northern fringe of the table-land, descending to the Jumna, is partially protected by this tract. On the west, it had always been easier of access from the direction of Jaipur and of Ajmer. Jaipur was frequently submissive to the authority of Delhi on account of its proximity; and Ajmer was early conquered by Muhammad Ghori. Malwa is a table-land with a rise towards it from all directions except the north-west. It was therefore easily accessible from that quarter, and was conquered in the course of the thirteenth century. The region of Mewar was accessible from Delhi in its eastern part; but it was buttressed by the Aravalli Range on the other side and by the hills and fortresses connected with them which fringe Gujarat on the north. The Aravallis had always been the 'Strong Refuge' † of the Rajputs,

The independent  
Rajput States

Their Political  
Geography

\* Elphinstone : *History of British India* (5th edition), p. 479.

† G. Festing : *From the Land of Princes* ; p. xi of the preface of Sir G. Birdwood ; and also Col. J. Tod : *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Popular Edition), Vol. I, p. 8.

when overwhelmed by invasions. They stretch north-east from the abrupt dome of Mount Abu, The Aravallis famous now for its Jain temples of white marble, and divide Rajputana into two parts. They lose themselves in disconnected ridges which finally disappear in the historic Ridge of Delhi.

To the east of the Aravallis lie the states of Mewar (Chitor), Amber (Jaipur), Kotah and Bundi which are watered by the Chambal and its affluents.

The Two Divi- Ajmer lies alongside the hill-range, just  
sions of Raj- about the point when it begins to decline  
putana steadily to the north. To the west of

the range lies the larger half of Rajputana including the states of Marwar (Jodhpur), Jaisalmer and Bikaner. This region is watered only by the salt river Luni which flows southwards to the Rann of Cutch and becomes a total desert in the tract between the Luni and the Indus, and known in parts as *Marusthali* (deadly region) and *Maruvara* (Marwar=the death-ward). Desert surrounds or intersperses the insulated fertile spots in this region; and on the west it is the desert that protects it from any attack from the Indus side. There were several petty principalities as Amarkot, situated in the extreme west of the desert,

which were also beyond the reach of  
Other Rajput Muhammadian attacks. The Rajputs  
Remnants sometimes took refuge in the sheltering

slopes of the Himalayas and continued to be independent for long. The road of Mussalman advance from Delhi to Ajmer was quickly extended through Malwa to Gujarat; and the principalities on either side of this route were subject to frequent invasions and exactions of tribute. The region of Gondwana was largely free from Muslim attacks and rule.

The social and political organisation of the Rajputs, their clannish and feudal spirit, their code of honour and chivalry and their weaknesses have been dealt with already.\*

*Vide Chap. XII, Sec. I of Part I—Hindu India,*

## SECTION II. THE FORTUNES OF THE PRINCIPAL STATES

The final fall of Rajput chivalry in Delhi and Kanauj before Muhammad Ghori was followed by the firm establishment of Muslim rule in Delhi and Ajmer.

**Rahtor Migration to Marwar**

The noblest Rajput heroes including Samarsi of Chitor, were decimated in the struggle. This war inspired the heroic Chand Bardai to "sing his undying requiem of the Rajput race." The scattered remnants of the Rajput clans of the Doab retired into the recesses of the Aravalli Mounts or into the desert region between the Luni and the Indus. The grandson of Jai Chandra settled in Marwar according to the Rajput bards, where he dispossessed the old inhabitants and founded the state of Jodhpur. A younger branch of his family founded in the fifteenth century the separate state of Bikaner and thus occupied an additional portion of the desert region. A section of the Rahtors clung on to the Doab, occasionally resisting Mussalman authority; and we read of the rule of Kanauj for eight generations by a Rajput tribe from Mahoba. The Rahtors of Jodhpur were almost immune from Mussalman intervention till the time of Sher Shah Sur

**Jodhpur and Bikaner**

who undertook an expedition against Maldeva\* who built up the greatness of its state, annexing Bikaner and encroaching on Jaisalmer, Mewar and Amber. Maldeva was still alive in the beginning of Akbar's reign and had apparently recovered from the shock of Sher Shah's attack. This tradition of the descent of the dynasties of Jodhpur and Bikaner from the Saharwars of Kanauj is disbelieved in the Combridge Indian History, Vol. 3.

Towards the west of the desert, almost within striking distance of the Indus, were the Bhattis of Jaisalmer, supposed to be the descendants of Sri Krishna's

**The Bhattis of Jaisalmer**

colony of Dwaraka. They settled in their present principality, probably in the eighth century and founded the town of Jaisalmer in 1156

\* "He transformed a loose feudal monarchy into a compact and centralised state and established various branches of his clan.— "sowed Rahtor seed," as the national bard sang, "throughout his conquered territories." It was the humiliation of the powerful Mewar State that enabled Marwar to rise to the first place among the Rajput states now. See K. Qanungo's *Sher Shah* (1921), p. 264.

A.D. They were not in any close contact with the Mussal-  
mans till the time of Akbar except that Alau'd-din Khilji  
despatched a successful campaign against the Rajput city.  
There was a huge holocaust of the women in the beleaguered  
fort, after which the Rajputs fell desperately fighting to  
the last. A young Bhatti prince was soon afterwards  
raised to the throne of his fathers by Alau'd-din himself.  
And "ever since that day the standard of this Bhattis has  
continued to fly over the battlements of Jaisalmer."

Jaipur is now one of the most important Rajput states;  
its Maharaja claims descent from Kusa, the son of Rama-  
chandra, and is the head of the Kachh-  
waha clan. The early history of the  
clan is obscure. It was in occupation of

The Kachhwahas  
of Jaipur

the strong fortress of Gwalior and Marwar in the tenth  
century and later, in the twelfth century, made Amber its  
capital. Amber continued to be the capital for nearly six  
centuries and gave its name to the kingdom. It was at first  
subordinate to the Chauhan rulers of Delhi; and one of its  
rulers, Dulha Rai, who married the sister of Prithvi Raja,  
was killed along with the latter in the struggle with  
Muhammad Ghori. Udai Karan was a prominent member of  
the line in the fourteenth century. On the establishment

The greatness  
under the  
Mughals

of the Mughal Empire, the Amber state  
came under its supremacy. Raja Bahar  
Mal (1548 to 1574 A.D.) was the first to  
pay homage to Akbar; he had received  
from Humayun the command of 5,000 troops and later gave  
his daughter in marriage to Akbar. His successors, Bhagwan  
Das and Man Singh, rose to high distinction in the Empire;  
and Jai Singh I, known as the Mirza Raja, rendered  
conspicuous assistance to Aurangzib; another ruler,  
Sawai\* Jai Singh II, built the new capital of Jaipur, and  
was noted for his scientific knowledge and skill. He erected  
observatories at Jaipur, Delhi, Ujjayini and other places  
and caused mathematical works to be translated into Sans-  
krit. After a great deal of suffering in the anarchy which

\*Sawai was a title given by the Mughal Emperor and means one  
and a quarter, i.e., superior to all the others. The bearer of the  
title was superior to all his contemporaries; and the title is even  
now borne by the Rajas of Amber.

preceded the establishment of British supremacy, the state has again emerged into prosperity and prominence.

Harauti, the country of the Hara Rajputs, comprises the territories of Bindi and Kotah. The Haras were a sect of the great Chauhan clan and settled in their present territory in the fourteenth century, being in some degree dependent on the state of Mewar. It was only in the beginning of the sixteenth century, that the tribe became prominent by obtaining the famous fort of Rantambhor from its Afghan governor.

The Sessodias of Mewar are the proudest of the Rajput clans and trace their descent from Ramachandra. The Maharana of Mewar bears the proud titles of *Hindya Suraj* (Sun of the Hindus), heir of Sri Rama and the vicegerent of Siva Ekalinga. The line is traced historically to Bappa Rawal who, as already noted, made use of the Bhil tribes and repulsed an Arab invasion of Mewar (cir. 730 A.D.). Bappa himself was supposed to be the tenth in descent from Goha (or Guha=cave-born), the son of a princess who escaped from the sack of Valabhi.\* He was at first a Rawal, (i.e., a small chief) under the Mori ruler of Chitor; and he belonged to the Guhila clan which was an offshoot from the ruling house of Valabhi. Like

Bappa Rawal Sivaji of a later age, Bappa was an intensely religious man and devoted to Siva; and like him, he freely mingled with the Bhil tribes round him, whom he disciplined into good fighters and engaged in his own service. He became "the Charles Martel of India against the rock of whose valour, as we have already said, the eastern tide of Arab conquests dashed to pieces in India."† But no Arab invader from Sind ever reached Mewar and its truth has been questioned. Bappa soon usurped the throne of Chitor and started the famous Guhilot line of Chitor in Mewar, which is one of the most unique in the

\* There is some difficulty in this chronology which makes Bappa a descendant; and one writer conjectures that Bappa was born in the year 191 not of the Sanvat era, but of the Valabhi era, of 509 A.E.

† C. V. Vailya: *History of Mediaeval Hindu India*, Vol. II, (Rajputs), p. 72.

history of the world. The successors of Bappa were generally free from Muhammadan aggression, mainly owing to the strength of their secluded region; and they played no important part in history till the sack of Chitor by Alau'd-din Khilji, except that Samarasinha is described by the minstrel Chand as having married a sister of Prithvi Raja and as having died, along with him, in battle with Muhammad Ghori.

At the close of the thirteenth century, Mewar was under the rule of a boy-king whose protector and guardian was his chivalrous uncle, Bhim Singh the husband of the far-famed Padmini. The story of Alau'd-din's passion for Padmini, of his first march against Chitor and of the Rani's stratagem in outwitting him is well-known. The bardic songs tell of the heroic resistance of the Rajput men and the horrible immolation of their women in fire which preceded the fall of Chitor into Muslim hands in 1303.\* Alau'd-din took the fort, razed it to the ground and appointed his own son as its governor. But Mussalman rule in Mewar was so insecure that the Sultan had to confer Chitor on another Rajput prince who continued to be loyal to Delhi till the end of the reign. The history of the time is greatly confused, Prince Hamir, a scion of the

Sessodia line, recovered Chitor and laboured hard to revive its strength. Hamir had a long and prosperous reign and ruled till 1364 A.D. After some time, Kumbha Rana (1419-69 A.D.) came to the throne and by his ability brought the Sessodia kingdom to its zenith, while Chitor became a more magnificent city than ever before. He erected numerous fortresses for the protection of his kingdom, the most prominent of which was Kumbhalmer; he was a poet also and a generous patron of the fine arts and himself wrote a commentary on the *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva. Possibly under the influence of Mira Bai,† he became an ardent devotee of the Krishna cult

Rana Hamir and  
Rana Kumbha

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\* The story of Padmini is discredited by some writers.

† Mira Bai was, according to one account, the daughter-in-law of Maharana Kumbha; while Tod says she was herself the wife of the Maharana, and another writer, Mecaulliffe, says that she was the wife of the son of the famous Rana Singram Singh. She popularised the Krishna Bhakti cult in Western India.

and raised a splendid temple to the god in his capital Chitor.

The Maharana met the combined forces of the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat and drove them back from Mewar. And as a permanent memorial of his victory over the Sultan of Malwa (1440) whom he took prisoner, he erected the magnificent black marble *Jaya Stambha* or Tower of Victory "which still dominates the ancient capital of Mewar, 'a ringlet on the brow of Chitor.'"<sup>\*</sup> Later the Maharana assisted the Sultan of Malwa in an attempt to seize the weak throne of Delhi which proved abortive owing to the sudden defection of his ally. Kumbha's dream was to liberate his country from the yoke of the Mussalman and to revive the Hindu empire of Prithvi Raja of Delhi. But it was not to be; and he died in the midst of domestic dissensions.

Singram Singh, otherwise known as Sanga, succeeded to the Mewar throne in 1509 A.D. and became the "kalasa or pinnacle of her glory."<sup>†</sup> He was the sixth in succession from Hamir and held, besides Mewar, the eastern part of Malwa as far as Chanderi and was recognised as their leader by the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and other Rajput states. It was he who defeated the forces of Mahmud II of Malwa who was assisted by the Sultan of Gujarat. He took advantage of the unpopularity of Ibrahim Lodi, and just on the eve of the battle of Panipat, sent an envoy to Babar at Kabul, offering him help in his projected invasion. After Babar resolved to stay in India and found an empire, Sanga began to form a combination against him. He was helped by the Lodi chiefs who had been dispossessed by Babar and by Hasan Khan of Mawat, a converted Hindu, and marched with a large force in the direction of Agra, in the vicinity of which, at Kanwaha near Sikri, he encountered Babar.

<sup>\*</sup> The idea is taken from the inscription carved on the tower by order of Maharana Kumbha.—The victory is denied in the *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 528.

<sup>†</sup> Tod: *Annals of Mewar* in Vol. I of the Popular Edition p. 240.



In the first shock of the attack, Babar's advance-guard was defeated with heavy loss; and had Sanga pressed home his advantage, victory would have been his certainly. But he allowed Babar ample time to take up a strong position and fortify his camp and to infuse courage into his soldiers. In the final struggle the Rajput ranks were decimated by the enemy's artillery fire. Babar's victory was complete; Rana Sanga escaped with difficulty from the field; and Hasan Khan and many other chiefs were slain.

Within a few months of his defeat by Babar, Rana Sanga died; and with his death vanished all the chances of the revival of a Rajput empire in Hindustan.

The turbulent disorder into which Mewar was thrown after the death of Sanga gave an opportunity to Bahadur Shah, the powerful king of Gujarat, who had already possessed himself of Malwa; he invaded the territory of the Rana and even laid siege to Chitor. At this hour of peril, Queen Karnavati, the youngest widow of Sanga, who had given birth to a posthumous son, Udai Singh, implored the aid of the Emperor Humayun and sent her bracelet\* to the Mughal with an urgent appeal for assistance. Humayun accepted the bracelet chivalrously and proceeded to the rescue of Chitor, though it involved a struggle with a brother Mussalman ruler. But before he could reach the besieged fortress, it had been successfully mined by the engineers and gunners of Bahadur Shah. The fortress fell into the hands of the Gujarat king, but not before the child, Udai Singh, had been carried to a place of safety and the heroic Karnavati had perished, along with thousands of her Rajput sisters, in a vault of gun-powder which was set fire to.

\* Among the Rajputs a custom still prevailed, known as the Bond of the Bracelet, by which "any Rajputni, wife, maid or widow, who found herself in peril, might send her bracelet to her chosen cavalier, thus adopting him as her *Rakhi-band bhai* (bracelet-bound brother) which put the obligation upon him to go to her assistance at all costs or to forfeit his honour. The truth of the story is denied by Sir Wolsley Haig in the *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. III (p. 531); and he says that Humayun refrained from attacking Bahadur Shah during the latter's fight with the Rajputs.

Humayun saved Mewar too late. But he pursued the demoralised Gujarat army back into their own country.

The child, Udai Singh, saved from the holocaust, ascended the throne of Mewar in 1537 after great difficulty. He was, however, destitute of the conspicuous bravery of his race; and the vices of his immediate predecessors were virtues when compared with this defect which destroyed "a great national feeling, the opinion of Mewar's invincibility." He submitted quietly to the dictation of Maldeva of Jodhpur and to the supremacy of Sher Shah. This was the situation of Mewar at the beginning of Akbar's reign.

The great rock-fortress of Gwalior was held by the Kachhwaha Rajputs when it was attacked by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna who had, however, to raise its siege (1022). Kutbu'd-din Aibek captured the fortress; it was quickly recovered by the Hindus and Iltutmish had to attack it again in 1232 and captured it. It remained in Muslim hands till the time of Timur's invasion when it was again recovered by the Rajputs. In the fifteenth century it was often attacked by the Sultans of Delhi and Malwa and finally submitted to Sutan Ibrahim Lodi, Raja Man Singh, the last great ruler of Gwalior (1486-1517), built the noble palace which crowns the rock-fort and was a patron of music. It was the Gwalior school of musicians that produced the famous singer of Akbar's court, Mian Tansen.

Besides these larger states of Rajputana, there were several petty principalities like that of Amerkot where Akbar was born, situated beyond the reach of the Mussalmans. Also a few chiefs like those of Sirohi, Jhalawar, etc., nestled themselves under the Aravalli Mountains. On the north-eastern slopes of the country, i.e., in Bundelkhand most largely, the principalities of Chanderi, Panna, Orchha and others were repeatedly attacked by the Mussalmans and were generally tributary to them. Most of their ruling houses were old Rajput families; and some of the hill-

states in the Lower Himalayas which had been formed by Rajput adventurers flying before the Mussalman invaders enjoyed a precarious independence. Chanderi rose to some power under Medini Rai, a Rajput adventurer, who got to great power in Malwa and afterwards usurped its government and who was under the protection of Rana Sanga. In 1528 the place was stormed by Babar; and the Rajputs in it perished to a man in the course of their most desperate resistance.

Gondwana, the region between Berar on the west and Orissa on the east, also retained its independence of Muslim rule in these centuries. The rulers of Chedi were, as we read, Hinduised Gonds. As many as four Gond kingdoms flourished in the country, one in the north of the region with its capital at Garba, two in the centre with capitals at Deogarh and Kherla and one in the south with its capital at Chanda. Rani Durgavati was the regent of the northern kingdom for her son and boldly resisted the attacks of the Sultan of Malwa and even the Mughal advance under Akbar. The kingdom of Kherla was battered between the attacks of the Bahmani Sultans on the south and those of the ruler of Malwa on the north. The Chanda kingdom lasted till 1751 when it was overthrown by the Marathas. Chanda had a long succession of good rulers, and all the Gond kings were promoters of architecture; though the people of Gondwana were backward, the kings patronised art and letters.

### SECTION III. HINDU LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

As we saw in a previous chapter, in spite of an obvious barrenness of Hindu culture, there was displayed in the period of early Muhammadan rule, great virility in some branches of Hindu learning like philosophy, jurisprudence and logic. The study of logic was cultivated sedulously at the great centres of learning like Vikramasila and Navadvipa (Nuddea). Commentaries on the ancient law-books on the lines of Vijnanesvara and of Jimutavahana continued to be

written.\* Mithila became a centre of juristic learning and literature and produced a separate school of law. The most important of the Mithila writers was Vachaspati Misra who flourished in the latter half of the fifteenth century and wrote both in Sanskrit and Maithili.

“Mithila fortunately escaped the ravages which invariably followed the Muhammadan conquests.” It escaped attacks till 1324 and its Karnata kings encouraged Sanskrit learning in which Smritic studies were largely developed. The Maithili tongue flourished greatly; and in Bengal, in spite of Muhammadan rule, Hindu learning did not die out. *Nyaya*, *Smriti* and *Bhaktidarsana* flourished; and Raghunath Siromani and Raghunandan Misra are too famous as writers to need detailed mention. With the revivalist movement of Bengal Vaishnavism begun by the famous Chaitanya (1486-1527) the literary output came to be much more vigorous and fruitful.

In the completely independent south, Hindu learning and culture continued to flourish, particularly under the Rayas of Vijayanagar. At the time when the empire of Vijayanagar was founded, a body of learned men, with the two famous brothers, Madhava and Sayana, at their head, set to work on committing to writing various books and commentaries bearing upon the religion of the Vedas. This Madhavacharya, commonly known to tradition as Vidyaranya, was “the establisher of the path of the Vedas” and wrote the famous work on Indian philosophy known as *Sarvadarsana Sangraha*; and his brother Sayana wrote commentaries on the Rig Veda, the Aitareya Brahmana and other works. Another minister at the court of

\* Vijnanesvara's famous commentary the *Mitakshara*, was written, according to Macdonell, about 1100 A.D. It is the chief authority on Hindu Law outside Bengal. Jimutavahana lived in the first half of the twelfth century, according to M. M. Chakravarti; and he wrote the *Dayabhaga*, the chief authority on the modern Hindu Law of inheritance and partition in Bengal. The jurist, Nilakanta, author of the *Vyavahara Mayukha*, of the sixteenth century, is of high repute in Western India; and the *Smriti Chandrika*, a work of the thirteenth century, is valued in South India; but both are only secondary to the *Mitakshara* in importance.

Vijayanagar was Madhavamantrin who was known as the "establisher of the path of the Upanishads."

The early Vijayanagar rulers patronised the Kalamukha sect of the Saivas; and Devaraya II revered the Lingayata Guru. The Srivaishnava and Madhva sects became very popular religions subsequently. But all of them were perfectly tolerant of the different faiths. The later development of Vijayanagar made it a great promoter of Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada literature in an eminent degree, especially under the princes of the Saluva and the Tuluva dynasties.

The Jains, working along undisturbed, produced a good quantity of religious and secular literature; commentaries and works on ethics and rituals were abundant among them; and they also wrote a few independent philosophical and poetical works. The Jain religion flourished in Tuluva under the patronage of the rulers of Karkal. It survived as a flourishing religion for long in parts of the Vijayanagar empire.

Alongside of these activities which showed that learning and literature continued to flourish in many parts of the land, we have to note how vernacular literature was given a special impetus by the religious revival which came in the shape of the Bhakti cult. The earliest bardic chronicles of Rajputana belong to the heroic times of Prithvi Raja and contain a core of sober history. The greatest name among these bards was that of Chand Bardai who was the minister and the poet-laureate of Prithvi Raja and who was killed, along with his master, in the battle with Muhammad Ghori. In his chief work, the *Prithi Raj Raso*, he has given the life of his patron and the history of his own times. This book is one of the earliest works in Hindi which have survived. The *Mahoba Khand* (*Alha Khand*)\* is another bardic poem describing the chivalrous deeds of Alha and Udal; and it is still sung by professional singers in Northern India. Other notable bardic poems describe the exploits of the house of Mewar and, particularly the heroism of Rana Hamir, who

\* Translated by W. Waterfield (ed., by Sir G. Grierson, 1923).

struggled against the Delhi Sultan. Some Hindi verses are supposed to have been composed by Amir Khushru, the Muhammadan poet, who died in 1325 A.D.

A new development in Hindi literature was created by the growth of the Vaishnava movement in North India. The reaction of Islam on Hinduism was one of the factors which led to this revival. *Bhakti* was a reaction against the ritualistic religion of the Vedas; and in its earliest phase, it was known, according to Sir R.G. Bhandarkar, as the *Ekantika Dharma* (the religion of a single minded love and devotion to the One) and was based on the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This cult became actively operative from the time of the great Ramanuja who was the source of inspiration to many of the *Sanyasi* reformers of the North and principally to Ramananda. The Vaishnava movement falls into three groups. Ramaita, Krishnaite and Deistic. But in all these, devotion to a personal god who is full of love and pity for his devotees, and the hope of obtaining release (salvation) through that devotion are common. "Bhakti was essentially a popular religious movement, and this is emphasised by its use of the vernacular, rather than Sanskrit, in the vast amount of literature it produced." \*

The labours of a brilliant succession of saints and reformers from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries not only led to the development of the vernaculars in which they preached to the masses, but also helped to free the popular mind from the thralldom of the priests. Thus, the reformers rendered eminent services to the nation; they modified the strictness of the spirit of caste exclusiveness, raised the lower classes to a position of spiritual importance and social power, increased the spirit of mutual toleration and the importance of woman in society and even brought about a reconciliation with the Muhammadans. They made the people more humane, lessened the importance of ceremonies and ritual, raised the value of a life of charity and helpfulness and checked the excesses of polytheism,

\* Keay : *A History of Hindi Literature*, p. 19.

and tended in all these ways to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity, both of thought and action.”\*

Ramananda probably flourished in the fourteenth century; but some would put him down as having lived a little later, from about 1400 to 1470 A.D.

**Ramananda** He preached that the eternal God should be worshipped under the name of Rama; and he made Benares the head-quarters of his new movement. He criticised idolatry and protested against caste distinctions, but did not attempt to do away with them altogether. He was the founder of the sect of the Ramanandis; and a number of other sects “owe their first impulse to the movement he initiated.” He was the great pioneer of the Bhakti movement in Hindustan and stressed on God’s love for all His creatures. He admitted into his order men of all classes without any distinction; and his disciples included a Jat, an outcaste, a Muhammadan weaver and a woman. His followers and successors almost entirely gave up the use of Sanskrit; and this meant an impetus to the revival of the vernaculars, particularly Hindi.

Earlier even than Ramananda were a few preachers among whom was a certain Jaidev, who is sometimes identified with Jaya Deva, the author of the famous *Gita Govinda*. Namdeva, who was a devotee of God Vithoba of Pandharpur in the Maratha country, probably lived about 1400 and wrote a large number of hymns in Marathi and Hindi as well. He exerted a large influence both in Maharashtra and in Northern India.

The greatest of the disciples of Ramananda was Kabir, a Muhammadan weaver and the founder of the *Kabirpanthi* sect. His date has been fixed for 1440-

**Kabir** 1518 A.D.; and whether he was by birth a Muhammadan as some aver, or not, Muhammadan influence can be traced in his ideas. His influence, both direct and indirect, has been very great. He condemned idolatry, rejected the doctrine of incarnation and also the meaningless ceremonies and rites of the Hindus. He seems to have been disliked by both sects and even persecuted by Sultan

\* M. G. Ranade : *Rise of the Maratha Power*, p. 172;

Sikandar Lodi who exiled him from Benares. Several collections of poems attributed to him have come down to us ; and some of these have been incorporated in notable works like the *Adi Granth* of the Sikhs and the *Bijak*, the chief book of his followers. He has been called "the pioneer of Hindi literature and the father of Hindi hymns." His verses\* have a wonderful charm and imagery : and translations cannot give a good idea of their force and value. Kabir never aimed at founding a sect : but his followers soon formed themselves into a sect, the *Kabirpanthis*, who still preserve some remnants of his original teaching.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 A.D.), the founder of the Sikh religion, came early under the influence of Kabir ; but he was much nearer Hinduism than his master. In his teachings morality of conduct holds a very high place, and purity of life is regarded as the highest object of human endeavour. Stress is laid on virtues which everybody can practise, like honesty, loyalty, justice, charity, mercy and temperance ; and cleanliness, alms-giving and abstinence from animal food are strictly enjoined. He was simply a teacher of religion and preached peace and good-will to all men. He did not aim at founding a narrow sect or monastic institution ; and how his faith, which could have developed into a Quaker-like quiet community, took a martial and national turn under the Gurus who followed him, we shall learn later on.

A noted follower of Ramananda was Ravi Das the Chamar, who founded an important Vaishnava sect of

\* One is reproduced below :—

"If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong ?

If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what has happened without ?

Hari is in the East : Allah is in the West. Look within your own heart for there you will find both Karim and Ram.

All the men and women of the world are His living forms.

Kabir is the child of Allah and Ram. He is my *Guru* ; he is my *Pir*." (Rabindranath Tagore : *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, lxix).



Hindustan. Mira Bai, the Saint of Rajputana (born 1470 A.D.), is one of the most famous Hindi poetesses and devotees of the Krishna cult. While the followers of Ramananda gave the name Rama to the supreme God, Mira Bai and others worshipped God in his Krishna incarnation. The Krishna cult had been receiving attention even earlier: but it became a prominent revivalist faith from the time of Mira Bai about whose devotion to the god of her choice very many fanciful legends are told. Details of Mira Bai's life are shrouded in mystery. She displayed an intensive attachment to God Krishna in her lyrics which she wrote in the Braj Basha, a dialect of Western Hindi. Similar lyrics in Gujarati are also ascribed to her.

The spread of the Krishna cult in the North was largely due to Vallabhacharya, a Brahman from the South, (d. 1531 A. D.) who established the faith firmly at Govardhan in the Braj country and whose disciples wrote largely in the Western Hindi tongue. Vallabha taught that marriage and family were no hindrance to a religious life and himself lived a married life. He spread his tenets both among the learned at Benares and at Muttra and his followers are now a numerous sect in Western India, particularly Gujarat. Under Vallabha's successors, the cult degenerated into some evils into the details of which it is not possible to enter here.

Tulsi Das is the most celebrated name in Hindi literature; he was a Kanaujia Brahman and spent the greater part of his life in Benares. His great work, the *Ram-Charit-Manas* (the Lake of the Deeds of Ram) is reputed even superior to that of Valmiki and is marked by the loftiest kind of morality. His religion is that of the love of "a personal God who loves and cares for his children and makes himself understood through his incarnation, Rama, the Saviour." Tulsi Das is "the tallest tree in the magic garden of mediæval Hindu poesy." The Rama cult reached its zenith under Tulsi Das. In each division the Bhakti

Vaishnava movement produced a large quantity of valuable vernacular literature and also exercised a great, refining and elevating influence upon the people. Tulsi Das founded no sect and did not add anything to Vaishnava theology. But his *Ramayana* has been "the most potent factor in making Vaishnavism the accepted cult of the vast majority of Hindus in North India to-day."

In Bengal there arose a similar revivalist movement, due to the efforts of the great Chaitanya. He was born at Nuddea (Navadvipa), the centre of Sanskrit learning, in 1485 A.D.; and he taught the passionate devotion inculcated in the *bhaguratha Parana* and roused his followers to devotional excitement by his *Sankirtan* and ecstatic dances. He was, first and foremost, a revivalist of the Krishna cult, but not a great organiser nor a writer. But his followers preached and spread his mission far and wide; and modern Vaishnavism in Bengal has been largely shaped by his ideas of devotion and service. "Modern Brindaban is the creation of the Bengali Vaishnavas and has eclipsed the older Mathura." Chaitanya's followers encouraged a revival of Sanskrit studies which have continued to this day in Brindaban and Navadvipa.\* He recommended mendicancy, started the institution of celibate monks or *gosalins* and assigned an important place to women in his order. He also originated the *Sankirtan* or Service of Song. Chaitanya is now looked upon by many as an incarnation of Krishna. His mission was spread extensively in Bengal by his lieutenant, Nityananda, and by other disciples who enriched Bengali with their songs, poems and translations from Sanskrit.

Krishna lyrics were written by other writers like Vidyapati and Chandidas. After the age of Chaitanya, Bengal was overshadowed by the literature of the Siva-Durga revival of the sixteenth century. The Krishna cult continued to flourish undisturbed in Orissa, owing to the prestige of the temple of Jagannath.

\* J. N. Sarkar: *Chaitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings* (1913), p. xiv.

In Maharashtra there was also a Vaishnava revivalist movement of which the most celebrated writer was Tukoba or Tukaram (born 1608 A.D.) whose *abhangas* (unbroken hymns) are famous throughout the land and abound in excellent morality. This revivalist movement which began as early as the thirteenth century, continued to operate most powerfully in the building up of a united and self-conscious Maratha people and formed the background, as it were, for the great work of Sivaji. The early saint, Jnaneswar, was a devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur. Namdev was another noted saint of Maharashtra; and still another saint was the lowly Choka Mela who belonged to the Mahar caste.

Siva-Durga literature was prominent in Bengal and in South India. Of the Saiva writers of Bengal of a later period, the most famous was Mukund Ram Chakravarti.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FOUNDATION OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

#### SECTION I. BABAR AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The year 1526 is a great epoch-making year in Indian history: for in that year was laid the foundation of a big empire which swayed the political destinies of the Indian people for more than two centuries. The builder of this empire was a remarkable individual, Zahiru'd-din Muhammad, surnamed Babar, the Tiger. The immediate circumstances under which he gained for his successors a big dominion have been sketched in a previous chapter. Let us, for the sake of clearness, briefly recount them.

Political India in the first half of the sixteenth century was divided into four well-defined zones. *First*, there was the northern belt of Muhammadan powers sweeping in a great semi-circle from the mouths of the Indus to the Bay of Bengal, and containing in the west the kingdoms of Sindh and Multan, the Punjab, nominally subject to Delhi but, in fact, the close preserve of three Afghan families, and Delhi itself.\* To the south and east lay Jaunpur belonging to the Sharqi dynasty which exercised political power over the modern provinces of Agra and Oudh. Further east, there was Bengal, almost isolated from the main currents of Delhi politics. The *second* zone consisted of the southern Muhammadan states such as Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh and the Deccan ruled by the Bahmani kings. Wedged in between these two groups of Muslim power, there was Rajputana, 'deathless and in-

\* Delhi was then reduced to a very insignificant position. Rushbrook Williams quotes an amusing Persian couplet which shows what ridicule and derision the pretensions of the Delhi Emperors of this period excited far and near:—

“Badshahi Shah Alam  
Az Delhi ta Palam.”

This means “The empire of Shah Alam stretches from Delhi to Palam.” Palam is a village quite close to Delhi. See his *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 5.

domitable after centuries of exterminating warfare, fast regaining some measure of its old strength through the divisions which had overtaken the politics of Islam.' To the south-east and east of Rajputana and Malwa there lay the forest region of Bundelkhand and Gondwana, still the home of independent Hindu kings. Of the states of Rajputana, Marwar and Mewar were getting powerful and, but for the Mughal advent into India, would have wrested the hegemony of North India into their own hands. This formed the *third* political zone. *Lastly*, there was the empire of Vijayanagar which presented a solid phalanx of opposition to the Muhammadan advance into the south and by waging frequent wars against the Bahmanis, disturbed their combinations, and prevented them from becoming dangerous to Rajputana. In this zone, besides Vajayanagar, there was the kingdom of Orissa which acted as a barrier to the southerly march of Bengal.

The history of most of these principalities we have reviewed already. What is more to the point is the situation at Delhi when the Mughals came.

**Delhi politics in 1451 A.D.**

The so-called Sayyat dynasty came to a miserable end in 1451. The all-powerful Afghan families ruling in the Punjab now placed on the throne Bahlol of the Lodi tribe. A good soldier and far-sighted statesman, this Bahlol was able to maintain his hold over Delhi by his personal charm and character. He soon reduced the neighbouring chiefs and re-annexed Jaunpur. He was so far successful as to pass on the empire to his son, Sikandar (1489-1517), who followed the policy of his father, one of extreme regard and friendliness for the Afghan tribes. But his successor, Ibrahim, played the tyrant and deservedly lost the sympathy and good-will of the tribes. He was soon to lose the Kingdom also. The Punjab and Jaunpur revolted; the Rajputs, ever on the alert to interfere in Delhi affairs, defeated Ibrahim in two battles. It was even feared that Singram

**Singram Singh of Mewar**

Singh of Mewar, the leader of the Rajput confederacy, would establish a Hindu empire at Delhi. 'But the fates willed otherwise.' Daulat Khan Lodi, go verner of the Punjab,

invited Babar, the ruler of Kabul, to go to Delhi and free it from the tyranny of Ibrahim. And thus it was that Babar entered India.

Babar was of the race of the Mughals, closely related to the two great Scourges of the East, Temujin, surnamed Chingiz Khan, and Timur, the Lame. On Babar's early career his father's side he was a direct descendant, in the fifth generation, of Timur, while his mother belonged to the line of Chingiz, in the fourteenth degree. "Babar is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar." He is deemed by Stanley Lane-Poole to have combined in his own person the daring and the restlessness of the nomad Tartar with the culture and urbanity of the Persian and to have brought into Hindustan the energy of the Mongol and the courage and capacity of the Turk. He was born on Friday, February 14th, 1483 A.D. His father was the ruler of a small state, Farghana, now a petty principality in Russian Turkestan. Babar inherited this throne while he was but twelve years of age. His early days were full of trouble. Little Farghana 'was menaced on three sides by invasions bequeathed by his hasty-tempered father.' Though in the end Farghana was reduced in size, Babar, as a result of these border raids, received considerable military training.<sup>1</sup> The greatest ambition of Babar His ambition was to seat himself on the throne of Samarkand. A lucky circumstance enabled him to realise the dream of his youth. Taking advantage of a succession dispute, he advanced against and occupied Samarkand in 1497. Babar fell ill here; and his ambitious minister at Farghana gave out that he was dead. Babar hastened from Samarkand to regain possession of his patrimony. He was too late. The rebels hanged his chief supporter Khwajah Kazi. Samarkand also was

\* An account of these wars is charmingly given in Stanley Lane-Poole's *Babar (Rulers of India Series)*, Chapter II, and also in his own autobiographical *Memoirs* (translated by Erskine and Leyden) (original edition, 1826; and revised edition by Sir Lucas King, 2 vols, 1921), and in a small work of S. M. Edwardes—*Babar, Diarist and Despot*.

seized in his absence by the mighty Uzbek leader, Shaibani. Thus Babar was now a landless adventurer. But as Kennedy has remarked, 'he laughed at misfortunes and determined to attempt his fortunes again on the field of battle.' \*

In 1500 Babar again took Samarkand, thanks to the unpopularity of the Uzbeks; but he did not retain it long, Babar turns to owing to the bad behaviour of his troops. Kabul The next few years of Babar's life were spent in vain attempts to recover Farghana, his paternal inheritance. Finding it hopeless, he turned his thoughts towards Kabul.

Kabul had belonged to Babar's uncle, Ulugh Beg Mirza, who died in 1501, leaving an infant son, Abdur Razzak. The Conquest of tribal chief, taking advantage of the Kabul (1504) minority rule, rebelled everywhere. That was a golden opportunity for a landless adventurer like Babar. He enlisted the sympathy of the Mughal soldiers serving Khurram, the ruler of the mountain tract between Farghana and Afghanistan, and, with their help, took Kabul. His conquest of Kabul was bloodless. He soon consolidated his position by the further conquest of Kandahar and Herat.

Babar valued Kabul very much because 'it lies between Hindustan and Khorasan.' Even then he did not abandon his early dream of annexing Samarkand and was full of "an unsatisfied yearning for the recovery of his mother-country." A Babar's final enterprise towards direct incentive to a fresh effort in that Transoxiana direction was the death of his old foe Shaibani. With the help of the Persian Shah, whom Babar befriended, he succeeded in taking Samarkand. This time Babar was not liked by the people as he allowed himself to be associated with the hated Shiahhs from Persia; for the entire Muhammadan population north of the Oxus belonged to the Sunni sect. About 1514, therefore, he was forced to quit Transoxiana, as the territory north of the Oxus was called, never to return. It was again the work of destiny. Failure in the regions of the Oxus prompted him to undertake a greater venture towards Hindustan.

Babar now assumed the title of Padishah (Emperor) by which he was ever afterwards known. His rule in Afghanistan was comparatively peaceful, while constant wars troubled both Persia and the region of the Oxus. He beautified Kabul laying out gardens and parks in it and attempted to pacify the unruly Afghan tribes by numerous punitive expeditions against them.

Preliminary to his conquest of India, Babar undertook various reconnoitring expeditions. In 1519 he laid siege to Bajaur full, west of the Indus. Next, he marched into the north-west Punjab and claimed the country as his own. It was on this occasion that he had a glimpse of the rotten politics of Delhi. As has been nar-

**Babar and India:**  
**His first inva-**  
**sions (1519-24)**

rated already, he was invited by Daulat Khan, the disloyal governor of the Punjab, to take up arms against Ibrahim. Babar, however, did not trust Daulat Khan; returning to Kabul, he brought fresh reinforcements and fought the battle of Panipat which placed him on the throne of Delhi.

Panipat was, in the days of Babar, an important and flourishing town. It was in the neighbourhood of this place

**Battle of Panipat**  
**(1526)**

that Babar prepared his ground for battle. The town itself sheltered his right wing; while, to the left, he strengthened his position by digging a ditch and constructing in front of it a defence of felled trees. His centre was considerably safeguarded by a line of breast-works and waggons, nearly 700 in number, and interlocked with large gaps at intervals to permit his cavalry-men to rush forth and charge. Babar's army consisted of only 6000 men; but they were all of them tried veterans. Sultan Ibrahim, on the other hand, had brought more than 1,00,000 men to the field; though they exhibited considerable personal bravery, they were ill-arranged and could maintain no order at the proper moment. After seven days of waiting, the troops of Ibrahim rushed on till they reached the defences of the Mughals; they then had to contract their extended front. In the meantime, the rear of Ibrahim also rushed behind, with

**Tactics of Babar**

the result that Babar saw in front of his soldiers a cramped mass of humanity



observing no order. It was then that he ordered his cavalry to charge and his artillery to open fire. In the confusion that ensued the Afghan forces were attacked on all sides. They could not move. Then ensued a terrible slaughter. More than twenty thousand of Ibrahim's soldiers lay dead on the battle-field, among them being the Sultan himself. India was Babar's. The success of the Mughals was due "to the skill of the leader and to the deadliness of his scientific combination of cavalry and artillery."

Babar used his success with moderation and was not much elated. He knew that his task had just begun.

After Panipat:  
Delhi and Agra

Promptly enough he despatched some picked divisions of his small army to take possession of Delhi and Agra. The former was occupied and a provisional government was established there. Humayun, Babar's eldest son, was in charge of the column operating against Agra. Agra offered little resistance and the booty obtained here was enormous. Babar now experienced the greatest difficulty; his soldiers began to grumble and wanted to go back to Kabul—a cry that annoyed him very much. Like Alexander the Great, Babar harangued his followers and encouraged them by pointing out the still unsubdued provinces as the prize of their glorious enterprise. Unlike Alexander's, Babar's speech had a telling and immediate effect. Except one or two men, all the military officers decided to stay in India and carry on the work of Babar.

This determination of Babar's followers to stay in India was a source of bitter disappointment to Sangram Singh of Mewar, the head of the Rajput confederacy, who had hoped that the Mughals would disappear with their booty just as Timur had done and who was the only formidable rival of the Mughal conqueror in Hindustan. Gathering a large army, Rana Sangram moved towards Sikri, twenty-three miles west of Agra. Thither came Babar to meet the flower of Rajput chivalry, fully equipped. It is said that the great Mughal leader constructed a monster gun to be used against the Rajputs. The battle took place in March, 1527, near Kanwaha, a village ten miles from Sikri. The tactics of

Battle of  
Kanwaha

Panipat were repeated. The Mughal artillery served by expert gunners from Turkey caused fearful carnage as in Panipat in the crowded Rajput ranks. At the same time the heavy casualties were thinning the Mughal ranks. A supreme effort was then made by Babar who in person dashed towards the Rajput centre, followed by his daring cavalry. "The hosts of Sangram Singh melted away like snow at noon-day and the battle of Kanwaha was over."

The results of the battle of Kanwaha were momentous. The menace of Rajput supremacy was removed once for

Results of the battle

all. The Rajput confederacy itself was broken up. The Mughal Empire in India was established firmly. The centre of

gravity of Babar's political power was shifted from Kabul to the plains of Hindustan. Babar now resolved to capture the great Rajput strongholds which flanked the reign of Delhi

Fall of Chand-  
deri (January  
1528)

and Agra. He advanced against Chand-  
deri, in the south-east of Malwa, which  
was under Medini Rai, one of the Maha-  
rana's distinguished lieutenants. He

carried the fort after a desperate charge in which the Rajputs perished almost to a man. Soon after the fall of Chand-deri, Rana Sanga died; and as there was a dispute over his succession, there was no longer any commanding leader to head the Rajput confederacy. Babar's next campaigns were directed against the comparatively weaker combinations of the Afghan forces in Bihar and Bengal. The latter were repulsed in the battle of the Ghagra (1529) near Patna. The Afghan nobles were still practically independent in Sindh on the west and in Bihar on the east;

Campaigns in Bihar

and the latter chiefs had actually de-  
feated the Mughal army sent against  
them and forced it to abandon Lucknow

and fall back from Kanauj. Babar himself now advanced against the Afghans, and compelled them to abandon Kanauj; after throwing a bridge over the Ganga in the face of the enemy, he attacked them on the other side of the river and dispersed their army for the time.

But the Afghans of Bihar quickly raised a renewed revolt under the lead of Muhammad Lodi, a brother of

Sultan Ibrahim, who thus made a last bid for Afghan restoration. Once more Babar marched the Mughals down the right bank of the Ghagra : May 1529 Ganga and dispersed the enemy chiefs from Chunar, Benares and Ghazipur : and Muhammad Lodi, finding himself isolated, sought protection with the independent Afghan ruler of Bengal. The Bengal army now gathered threateningly along the frontier, near the junction of the Ghagra and the Ganga. And Babar marched to meet them, after making unusually elaborate preparations, particularly in the matter of artillery pieces, cannon (or *feringhi* pieces) and swivels being largely used. The main Mughal army crossed the Ghagra in the face of a vigorous cannonade and charged the different parties of the enemy facing them and drove them from the field. The fruits of the victory were the complete collapse of the Afghan rebellion and the conclusion of a treaty of peace with the ruler of Bengal.

The Rajputs and the Afghans, possible rivals for the empire, having been disposed of thus, little remained to be done by way of immediate military campaigns. Babar's health was rapidly giving way and he also suffered from mental depression. It was at this time that an attempt was made by Khalifa, Babar's life-long friend, to place on the throne Mir Muhammad Mahdi Khwaja, the husband of Babar's full sister, in preference to Humayun.\* But this palace conspiracy failed owing to the timely interference of Humayun's mother, Maham. The basis for such a conspiracy was Babar's dislike of some of the actions of Humayun. Be that as it may, Humayun was hastily summoned from Badakhshan and was restored to Babar's favour—a fact which the conspirators failed to understand.

Humayun, as soon as he returned to Delhi, went to Samhal with a large force to complete the settlement of his *jagir*. There he fell seriously ill and was brought to Agra. Babar was so affected in mind at the sight of his

\*Vide Appendix B—Mahdi Khwaja—in *The History of Humayun* by Gul-Badan Begum, tr. by A.S. Beveridge (P.T.S.), new edition.

suffering son that he resolved to sacrifice himself for the sake of Humayun. The story goes that Babar walked round Humayun three times and then exclaimed that he had taken back on himself his son's sickness. Strangely enough, Humayun recovered; and Babar sickened and died on Monday, December 26th, 1530. He was buried upon one of the hill-sides of Kabul overlooking a noble prospect of meadow and stream—a scene which he loved well.

Babar's character is best studied in the Turkish *Memoirs* which he himself wrote. He was a gentleman, gallant and true. According to an old writer\* he possessed eight fundamental qualities—lofty judgment, noble ambition, the art of victory, the art of government, the art of conferring prosperity upon his people, the talent of ruling mildly the people of God, ability to win the hearts of his soldiers and love of justice.

“A striking feature in Babar's character,” says Erskine, the translator of the *Memoirs*, “is his unlikeness to other Asiatic princes. Instead of the stately, systematic, artificial character that seems to belong to the throne in Asia, we find him natural, lively, affectionate, simple, retaining on the throne all the best feelings and affections of common life. We shall find few princes who are entitled to rank higher than Babar in genius and accomplishment. His grandson Akbar may perhaps be placed above him for profound and benevolent policy. The crooked artifice of Aurangzib is not entitled to the same distinction. The merit of Chingiz Khan and of Tamerlane terminates in their splendid conquests, which far excelled the achievements of Babar. But in activity of mind, in the gay equanimity and unbroken spirit with which he bore the extremes of good and bad fortune, in the possession of the manly and social virtues, so seldom the portion of princes, in his love of letters and his success in the cultivation of them, we shall find no other Asiatic prince who can justly be placed beside him.” According to Elphinstone, the

\* Iminaki Fragment quoted by Rushbrook Williams: *An Empire-Builders of the 16th Century*, p. 179.

Champanir was taken by storm, and Humayun was one of the first forty to scale the precipitous face of the fort. Though Gujarat and Malwa were subdued, Humayun could not retain them permanently. A slave to the opium habit, he relapsed into inactivity after his successes. He heard that the Afghan chief, Sher Khan, had made himself master of Bihar and was engaged in the conquest of Bengal and that Mahmud Lodi had risen in Kanauj. His brother Askari, who was in charge of operations, showed signs of disaffection. Humayun withdrew to Agra (1536). Bahadur Shah himself was not slow to take advantage of the situation. He returned with a strong force, ejected the Mughal troops and once again established his power in Gujarat and Malwa. But he did not live long to enjoy his recovered kingdom. While on a visit to the Portuguese at Diu, he was cruelly done to death.

In the meantime, matters were taking a serious turn in Bihar and Bengal. Sher Shah of the Sur family, mentioned earlier as having submitted temporarily, now rose in open rebellion. He quickly secured all Bihar and Bengal from the fortress of Chunar down to the delta and adroitly inveigled Humayun into the valley of Bengal during the rainy season and cut off his communications with Agra and Delhi. Humayun pressed energetically on Chunar and took it. He then advanced on Gaur (the capital of Bengal), but an attempt was made to hold him up at the defile of Teliyagarhi (Rajmahal Pass), while Sher Shah cleverly removed his family, treasure and artillery into the interior fortress of Rohtas. Humayun captured Gaur, but relapsed into inactivity. But, in the interval, Sher Shah had overrun the whole country from Chunar to Jaunpur and assumed the royal title. Too late and with an army ill-prepared for a campaign and weakened by the deadly climate of a Bengal monsoon, Humayun began his retreat towards Agra, while he was weakened further by the revolt of Hindal. Sher Shah assumed royal state and decisively defeated the Mughal forces in two engagements, one at Chaunsa on the Ganga (June 1539) and the other opposite Kanauj (May

Sher Shah  
defeats the  
imperial forces

1540). The latter event resulted in Sher Shah capturing Delhi and Agra. The three brothers of Humayun, now dethroned, could not be induced to unite their forces against the common enemy. Hindustan was lost to Humayun; and Sher Shah established an Afghan dynasty which, though short-lived, was brilliant. Before we consider the history of this meteor-like dynasty, we shall complete the career of Humayun, one of the most unfortunate of kings, who spent a large part of his life in exile and misery.

Deserted by his brothers and having no hopes of putting on the field a decent army, he fled to Sind relying on the promise of one of his vassals there.

Humayun goes  
to Sind

In the course of his wanderings through the pathless deserts of Sind, he was reduced to the greatest straits, living on berries, lacking water, and relentlessly pursued by enemies. Here, in the midst of his exile, his son Akbar was born at Amarkot on November 23, 1542. Jauhar, a faithful attendant of Humayun, narrates in his *Memoirs*, the manner in which such a happy incident was celebrated in the desert of Sind.

Birth of Akbar  
(1542)

A pod of musk which was the only present available for the king was broken and distributed to the principal persons with the words: "This is all the present I can afford to make you on the birth of my son, whose fame will, I trust, be one day expanded all over the world, as the perfume of the musk now fills this apartment."\*

In Sind Humayun got no help. In great disappointment, he turned towards Kandahar where his brother

Humayun seeks  
Persian help

Askari was ruling. But the latter had no idea of helping him; on the other hand, he came with a large body of horse to capture Humayun. Suspecting his brother's intentions, the Emperor fled across the border of Baluchistan, crossed the Helmand and reached the territory of the Shah of Persia. In his hurried flight, the infant Akbar was left

*The Tezkereh Al Wakiat or Private Memoirs of the Emperor Humayun*—by Jauhar—tr. by C. Stewart (ed. of 1905), p. 66.

behind. Askari had, however, the humanity to bring up the child properly at Kandahar.

The Persian Shah received the fugitive Emperor of Hindustan with all civility and promised military help to recover his empire, provided he embraced the Shiah faith, and also gave him Kandahar, to which, out of sheer necessity, Humayun had to agree. With the help of the Persian forces he soon defeated his brother Askari, but, instead of handing over Kandahar to the Shah, Humayun re-  
covers the  
empire thought it prudent to retain it himself. Next, Humayun drove out his brother Kamran from Kabul and took it. Having thus recovered his military strength, he invaded India and, in July 1555, took both Delhi and Agra from Sikandar Sur, a nephew of Sher Shah and a pretender to the throne, who was defeated at Sirhind. More fighting had to be done before he could consolidate his dominion. At this time Humayun met with his death. He was on the roof of his palace and was descending therefrom when he heard the call for prayer. In his attempt to sit down till the call was over, he tumbled and fell headlong down the stairs on to the floor below. He died in January 1556. "He left behind him an enemy still unsubdued, a minor son and a mercenary army. Fortunately for that son, unfortunately for the enemy, he also left behind him a strong man Bairam Khan, equal both to the task of conquering the external enemy and restraining internal dissension and trouble."\*

Humayun came to the throne when he was twenty-six years of age. He was nominally king for twenty-six years, but his effectual rule lasted only for ten years. It is said of him that he was always unable to think of the morrow. Want of foresight almost ruined him. A lover of ease and pleasure, he was addicted to opium. As a general he was useless, though he displayed on occasions conspicuous personal bravery, as, for example, his scaling of the Champanir fortress. Credulous to a degree, he was deceived easily by his courtiers. A lover of pomp and vain ceremonies, few sovereigns

\* P. Kennedy: *History of the Great Mughals*, p. 224.

in the east have been so fond of foolish ostentations as he. But unlike other sovereigns, Humayun was eminently merciful—a quality which won for him the love of his contemporaries\*

### SECTION III—THE SUR DYNASTY

We shall pass now into the history of the short-lived Sur dynasty of the Afghans. This dynasty was, as we have seen, founded by Sher Shah whose  
**Early career of Sher Shah** original name was Farid. His father Hasan had two *parganahs* (districts) in Bihar, south of the Ganga. After experiencing considerable difficulties in early life, he succeeded to his father's estates after his death. The grant of a *parganah* in those days carried with it administrative responsibilities. Sher Shah, in the capacity of a *parganah*-holder, introduced salutary reforms in his land revenue administration, the main features of which were copied later on by Akbar. He discouraged the system of granting *jaghirs* for services rendered to himself and reserved to himself the right of resuming those granted already. He was exceedingly kind to the agriculturists and gave them the option to pay their rent in kind or money, whichever seemed best in their interests. He did away with the system of middlemen altogether, as it was contrary to the Muhammadan law. He fixed the fees for measuring fields and collecting taxes and punished severely those who fleeced the poor peasant. A lenient assessment and a strict collection of revenue so assessed would appear to have been Sher Shah's chief principles of revenue administration.

From such humble beginnings, Sher Shah soon rose to supreme power. He entered the service of Babar and was placed in charge of the *parganahs* near  
**Sher Shah becomes master of Bengal and Bihar** Buxar (1528). He is credited with having perceived the defects of the civil and military administration of the Mughals and adopted the good points in their military organisation. By the end of Babar's reign, Sher Shah acquired the whole

\*Dr. Banerji remarks with truth *Humayun Badshah*, 1939) that "he failed on account of the defects of his qualities."



of Bihar, thanks to constant quarrels between the rulers of Bengal and Bihar. By a stratagem he acquired Chunar, the only strong and safe fortress for 300 miles along the Ganga, from Allahabad to Monghyr. With this in his possession, he had no difficulty in reducing the country around it. As has been mentioned already, Humayun laid siege to Chunar, but Sher Shah wisely submitted now. Later on, Sher Shah obtained by a trick the fortress of Rohtas. It was this activity on the part of the Afghan that induced Humayun to withdraw himself from Gujarat; but Sher Shah knew that the Mughal Emperor was slow and inactive. He therefore strengthened his position and took possession of the key of Bengal, the Rajmahal Pass. The Mughals came and even took Gaur, but the rainy season had commenced and Humayun could do nothing. Sher Shah was on the

**He establishes a  
dynasty**

other hand busy organising his force.

He defeated the Mughals at Chaunsa; after his victory, he consolidated his hold on Bengal and Jaunpur and had himself crowned king.\* Humayun lost several months in indecision, while Sher Shah was ready on the upper Ganga for war. The latter again defeated the Emperor at Kanauj. After this second victory, he soon came into possession of Agra, Delhi and Lahore and proclaimed a new dynasty—that of the Sur Afghans.

Sher Shah's task was not yet over. He reduced the Gakkar tribes between the upper courses of the Jhelum and the Indus and even tried to oust the Mughals who had occupied Kashmir. He reduced the fortress of Gwalior and then

**His other  
successes**

proceeded against Malwa which also he subdued. There was still the Rajput country which, except in the border regions, did not acknowledge his sway. He took the fort of Raisin from Puran Mal; and in 1544 A.D. he marched against Marwar, the present state of Jodhpur. After receiving the submission of Muldeva, its Rahtor ruler, and getting possession of Ajmer and Mount Abu, he led his forces against Chitor, now no longer the glory of Rajputana.

\* K. R. Qanungo's *Sher Shah* (1921), p. 204.

From Chitor, Sher Shah reached Kalanjar, a strongly fortified place. While conducting operations here, a chance shell burst and killed him (May, 1545 A.D.)

Sher Shah had reigned but for five years (1540-1545). During this short period he accomplished many things. He

**Sher Shah's system of administration** built up from below a solid structure of government, with the *parganah* as the unit of administration. Each *parganah* was to be governed by one *shiqdar* (magistrate), one *amin* (collector of revenue), one treasurer and two *karkuns* (writers). Several *parganahs* formed a *sarkar* or district, over which there were two officials, one military (the chief *shiqdar*) and the other civil (the chief *munsif*) who tried civil suits. All officials, both of the *parganah* and of the *sarkar*, were transferred every two or three years.\*

**His control over the work of government** Sher Shah did not retain large provinces and desired to avoid big governorships, except over the frontier provinces like the Punjab and Southern Malwa. His government was based on the king's supreme power. The ministers were mere secretaries and carried out the orders of the Sultan who attended to every business and issued all *farmans* or orders himself, besides carefully inspecting and taking account of the treasure in the treasury. It is said that the accounts of the various officers and the reports of the ministers were read out every day to the monarch whose orders on them were recorded carefully. Sher Shah restored the machinery and strength of the government which acquired "some mechanical efficiency of the bureaucratic type;" and his administrative genius was of great use to the Mughals who succeeded him.

**Military reforms** In the affairs of the army, Sher Shah's chief aim was to put down the power of the feudal lords over their contingents and to prevent rebellions that were due largely to the attachment of the common soldiers to their immediate captains. He

\*Qanungo's view that Sher Shah governed through the officers of the Sarkars is criticised by Dr. Saran (*Provincial Government of the Mughals*) who holds that provinces (Subahs) continued.

began the practice of taking down descriptive rolls of soldiers, revived the system of branding the cavalry horses with the *dagh*, that was attempted by Alau'd-din Khilji, and personally inspected all recruits. He distributed portions of the army among the various strategic points of the empire; and each one of these army divisions was known as a *fauj* and was under a *faujdar* who was a purely military official. The cavalry formed the most important section of the army; but attention was paid to the infantry which was armed with muskets and bows, while a good park of artillery was kept up. Hindus were allowed to occupy important posts in the army; and this formed "a part of his general scheme of nation-building."

The revenue reforms of Sher Shah have always been deemed to be of the greatest importance. He had framed already his principles of revenue settlement and collection in his paternal *jaghirs* in Bihar. He had all the lands measured on a uniform system of measurement; and the holding of every *rayat* was separately measured and marked. He fixed one-fourth of the estimated produce as the share of government; and he gave the cultivator the choice of paying either in produce or in cash, though he preferred the latter. The *amin* of the *parganah* was in charge of all revenue affairs; and he gave a *patta* (title-deed) to every *rayat*, marking his holding and the demand of the state on it; and the latter gave an agreement (*kabuliyat*) to the officer, agreeing to pay the fixed amount for his holding. The cultivators were encouraged to pay their taxes directly to the *parganah* officers; and several small dues were abolished. Sher Shah's order to his revenue officers was:—"Be lenient at the time of assessment, but strict at the time of collection." Assessment was made yearly and arrears were not to accumulate. This system of revenue management was introduced in all parts of the empire wherever it was possible. Its essential features were later on adopted by Rajah Todar Mal, the great minister of Akbar, who had indeed entered government service under Sher Shah; and it has survived in British India in many

of its features. If this system had been fully enforced everywhere, the zamindars and other middlemen between the cultivator and the government would have disappeared.

Sher Shah greatly improved the coinage of the empire and put an end to debased and mixed coins. His silver rupee was practically equal in value to

Other Improve-ments of Sher Shah the modern rupee; it contained his name in Nigari characters, in addition to the usual Arabic inscription. His

coinage system lasted throughout the Mughal period and has served as "the basis of the existing British currency."

Sher Shah regulated trade, abolished all internal customs and allowed the levy of duties only on the frontier and at the place of sale. Goods were allowed to enter Bengal from abroad free of import duty; but duties were collected at the passes on the north and east. He constructed a

large trunk road from Bengal to the north-west frontier; other roads were built, leading from Burhanpur to Agra

and from Lahore to Multan. He planted trees on both sides of the roads and built serais at intervals for the benefit of travellers. He introduced the Persian mail (post), a system by means of which letters were carried by mounted couriers. He put down violent crime; and he meted out even-handed justice to all. An enthusiastic Afghan chronicler, Abbas Khan, thus records about the general state of the country in the time of Sher Shah:—"And in the time of Sher Shah's rule, a decrepit old woman might place a basketful of gold ornaments on her head and go on a journey and no thief or robber would come near her, for fear of the punishments which Sher Shah inflicted. 'Such a shadow spread over the world, that a decrepit person feared not a Rustam.' During his time, all quarrelling, disputing, fighting and turmoil, which is the nature of the Afghans, was altogether quieted and put a stop to throughout the countries of Roh and of Hindustan."\*

\* Elliot, Vol. IV, pp. 432-33; See also K. Quatung's *Sher Shah* (1921), Chap. XII, for an estimate of the reign. Abbas Khan was very partial towards Sher Shah.

Sher Shah made the village and *parganah* officials responsible for the peace of the country and its safety from thieves and bandits. He planned fortresses in every district so that they might serve as places of refuge for the people in times of danger. His greatness as a ruler has been likened to that of Peter the Great of Russia or Frederick the Great of Prussia and even to that of Napoleon and Julius Caesar. He was averse to unnecessary bloodshed and cruelty and his wars were all marked by moderation, such as suited the times. His reign marked "the beginning of that era of liberal Islam which lasted till the reaction of Aurangzib's reign." He did not persecute the Hindus on grounds of religion; and though he did not abolish the *jiziya*, he tolerated Hinduism and treated the Hindus with kindness. "His aim was to create a secular spirit in the state and keep religion in the background..... having nothing to do with public life." He utilised all sections of the people in the building up of his state, made no racial discrimination, admitted all the previous ruling tribes, like the Khiljis and the Turks, into his service and tried to liberalise the minds of his fellow-Afghans. He is regarded as having inspired and guided the path of his great successor, Akbar; and as having had "more of the spirit of a legislator and guardian of his people than any prince before Akbar." \*

Sher Shah's  
greatness

His place in  
history

His successors

The successors of Sher Shah were all weak and utterly unworthy of the heritage created for them by the enterprise and genius of Sher Shah. He was succeeded by his second son, with the title of Islam Shah, and he had the energy, but not the

\* See Elphinstone, pp. 457-8; Erskine: *History of India under Babar and Humayun*, Vol. II (1854), pp. 441-4; and Qanungo: pp. 4-0-6. The last writer says:—"Considering all phases of activity and actual achievements, Akbar is justly entitled to a higher place in history than Sher Shah. But in constructive statesmanship executive ability, attention to the details of government, indefatigable industry and thoroughness, unwearied vigilance, sense of justice, purity of personal character, and as a disciplinarian and a strategist, Sher Shah undoubtedly stands above Akbar." This opinion of Qanungo is considered an exaggeration by Dr. Tripathi who holds that Akbar was a greater statesman,

ability, of his father. Islam Shah is said to have continued his father's liberal policy towards the Hindus; but his reign  
 Islam Shah was marked by a puritanical revivalist

movement in Islam which called attention to abuses prevailing in the practice of religion and attacked the subserviency of the Islamic priesthood to the state. He improved the army organisation and followed an enlightened policy. He was very orthodox and abstemious and very generous to men of learning.\* After him (1553) there was anarchy; and one Adil Shah, a brother-in law of Islam Shah, usurped the throne. When Humayun came

back from Persia he had to meet at Sir-  
 The end of the Sur dynasty hind a formidable force under the command of Sikandar Sur, a nephew of Sher Shah and one of the pretenders to the throne of Delhi (Nov. 1554). During the last days of the Sur dynasty, political power went into the hands of a Hindu named Himu. We shall come to know more about this adventurer in the next section.

\* For an account of this reign and of the fall of the Sur dynasty see *The Successors of Sher Shah* by Nirod Bhushan Roy; 1934: Chh; VI-X. The last years of the Suri rule were marked by the ascendancy of Himu and his Hindu lieutenants, "foreshadowing the future eminence of Raja Man Singh and Todar Mal."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE REIGN OF AKBAR

#### A. CONSOLIDATION OF THE EMPIRE

When Humayun died, his eldest son, Akbar, was in camp with Bairam Khan, his guardian and a faithful servant of the late Emperor. Bairam promptly enthroned Akbar in a garden at Kalanaur on February 14, 1556. This act merely announced to the world that

Akbar's accession (February 1556)

Akbar was the legal sovereign of Hindustan. A good deal remained to be done before Akbar could call himself the *de facto* sovereign as well. Two or three members of the Sur dynasty had still the courage to stand out and to claim Delhi as their right. A Hindu adventurer, Himu, was in occupation of Delhi and Agra. The Rajput clans of Rajasthan had once again regained some of their former strength. Malwa and Gujarat had declared their independence; Gondwana, as a portion of the Central Provinces was once called, recognised no suzerain; and Orissa was likewise independent. The Deccan Sultanates were busy with their wars and political intrigues and had little time left to think of the Padshah of Delhi. In the far south there was the Vijayanagar empire, now safe on

Political condition of Hindustan

account of its remoteness from Delhi, and little concerning itself with the shifting politics of Hindustan. The Portuguese had also built up their naval supremacy and trade dominance on the western coast and had consolidated their political position. Such was the condition of India when Akbar, a boy of thirteen years of age, ascended the throne.

Akbar's—more properly, Bairam Khan's—immediate task was against the ingenious Hindu, Himu. He was a native of Rewari in Mewat and a Bania by birth. He was employed by King Ahmad Shah Adil—or Adali, to call him by his shortened name—the successor of Islam Shah; and the Bania was exceedingly useful to him. It is said

that he won several victories for his master. He was sent against Humayun when the latter returned to India after his wanderings. Himu, the Hindu adventurer The son of Babar, however, maintained his own against Himu. Now the Hindu Bania was employed by Adali to prevent Akbar from getting his throne. Taking with him a large force, Himu advanced by way of Gwalior and Agra and inflicted near Delhi a defeat on the Mughal forces, commanded by a powerful Turkoman, Tardi B-g. Delhi and Agra fell to Himu. Adali, his master, was far away. He is said to have assumed the title of Vikramaditya and even struck coins in his own name. But, perhaps, Himu did not do so. He was too cautious to alienate the Afghans who were his main support. Abul Fazl, the learned historian of Akbar, pays a tribute to the many good qualities of Himu and says that "from foresight he preserved the nominal sovereignty for Adil and waged brave wars against his opponents."

Buram Khan realised the danger of the situation; he sternly opposed the advice given by the army captains to retreat to the west of the Indus. His wrath first fell upon the unlucky commander, Tardi Beg for deserting his post. He had him executed even without obtaining the royal permission. He then hurried, with what troops he could collect, to Thaneswar and thence to the now famous plain of Panipat. In point of numbers, Himu's forces were superior. In the course of the struggle that took place near Panipat, one of Himu's eyes was pierced through by an arrow and this rendered him unconscious. As in the first battle of Panipat, the Mughals gained their victory, mainly by dint of their quick-moving cavalry, their enveloping movements and their well-directed volleys of arrows. Himu only followed the traditional Indian mode of warfare pinned his faith on his elephants, while his cavalry formed only an auxiliary.\* Himu was captured and brought before Akbar, and Buram Khan, the faithful guardian, now requested his king to cut off the head of Himu with the royal hand and

\* For a description of the battle and an estimate of Himu's services, see N.B. Roy: *The Successors of Sher Shah* (1934), Chap. IX.



thus obtain the name of Ghazi. Akbar did certainly do so.\* "Himu's head was sent to Kabul to be exposed and his trunk was gibbeted at one of the gates of Delhi." Thus was the Mughal Empire again established: and it was in no small measure due to the prompt and energetic action of Bairam Khan (Nov. 1556).

After the battle, Delhi and Agra were occupied by Akbar. Next, he proceeded to Lahore and went in pursuit of Sikandar Sur who surrendered himself at Mankot (now in the Jammu territory of the Kashmir State). Between 1558-1560 A.D., Akbar conquered a considerable portion of western Hindustan including Gwalior, Ajmer and the province of Jaunpur.

In the year 1560, Akbar attained the age of eighteen; and his very first act was to dismiss his faithful and loyal servant, Bairam Khan. The services of the latter to the empire in general and to Akbar in particular were many. He was Akbar's prime-minister and guardian. From him Akbar learnt the art of war. Perhaps the bigotry of Bairam Khan and his notion that the Hindus must be governed by the inexorable law of the Quran were distasteful to Akbar who, even at the commencement of his career, had realised the need for absolute religious toleration in India. The regent's arbitrary and despotic acts had alienated many from him, including Maham Anagah, the influential foster-mother of Akbar. It is certain, at any rate, that Bairam's dismissal was brought about by the influence of the harem. After his dismissal Bairam Khan was ordered to proceed to Mecca. He obeyed, but incensed at the insolence of an officer on whom he had previously bestowed favour, came back and rebelled in the Punjab. He was defeated and forced to fly to the Siwaliks for shelter, but pardoned by Akbar. Bairam next proceeded to Gujarat on his way to Mecca, when he was murdered by a private enemy.

\* This is the statement of Vincent Smith on the authority of Ahmad Yadgar and the Dutch writer, van den Broecke (p. 39 of *Akbar, the Great Mogul*).

From 1560 to 1567, Akbar was engaged in putting down rebellions among his own followers. The leaders of most of these were members of the Mughal aristocracy. Their object was to reduce Akbar to the position of a nominal suzerain, and then to take over the exercise of full feudal powers in their respective *jaghirs*. Such an idea was revolting to the centralising tendencies of Akbar. It will be tedious to mention in detail about these insurrections. Chief among those who desired independence was Uzbek Ali Kuli Khan, known as Khan Zaman. He was sent against the Afghans who attacked Jaunpur. He checked them, but attempted to make himself independent. In the end Khan Zaman was punished in a cruel way—he was trodden to death by an elephant. Again, when a son of a former Afghan governor of Malwa rebelled and established himself as an independent ruler, Akbar sent a court noble, Adham Khan, the son of his foster-mother, against him. But the latter proved to be as disloyal as Khan Zaman. Akbar pulled him down vigorously. In fact, Akbar never allowed his nobles to get the upper hand of him. On one occasion he had to put down a foolish attempt made by his younger brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim, who was encouraged by these rebellions to claim the throne of Hindustan for himself and advanced from Kabul to Lahore, but wisely submitted and retired back to Afghanistan (1566). Akbar had also turned his arms against Gondwana (northern part of the Central Provinces) which was then under the brave Rani Durgavati, who was the regent for her minor son. She boldly and gallantly resisted the advance of the Mughal army and died, bravely fighting at the head of her troops. The capital was plundered and the young rajah died also bravely fighting, while the women of his household committed the awful act of *jauhar*.

Akbar had been now on the throne for twelve years. The first half of this period was passed under the guardianship of Bairam Khan; and the second "under female ascendancy, amidst partisan quarrels and

Expansion of the  
empire from  
1567

open rebellions.”\* From 1567 onwards Akbar was busy expanding his empire. These foreign wars did not, however, absorb the entire time of Akbar to the detriment of his administration. In the interval between any two wars Akbar introduced many salutary reforms which will be recounted later on in some detail.

Akbar's first great military enterprise was directed against the proudest of the Rajput chivalry, the Rana of Mewar. The cause of the war was the independent attitude of the Rana whose family never allowed a daughter to enter the Mughal palace. Moreover, Akbar could never feel himself secure in North India unless the two strong fortresses of Chitor and Rantambhor in the free Rajput country were reduced. Chitor seemed to have been attacked by Akbar unsuccessfully on a previous occasion, according to Tod.

Chitor in the time of Akbar was an exceedingly strong fortress, standing on a hill in the midst of a level plain; and the circuit of its base was 15 miles. It was carefully protected on the eastern and northern sides, while guns and catapults could not damage the other sides of the fort. 'All the ground at the top was occupied, and the houses rose to several storeys. The battlements were numerous guarded and great stores of ammunition were in the fort.'† Akbar realised that Chitor required a long siege. Collecting a vast army of workers, he dug trenches and constructed *sabats* from which points of vantage he could view the defensive operations and also take part in the struggle. The defence of this famous fortress was in the hands of Jaimal, the cowardly Rana having previously deserted the fort. The siege lasted nearly four months. In the end breaches were effected in various

\* Iswari Prasad questions Smith's picture of Akbar being under petticoat government". Akbar acted according to his own judgment.

† Read, for a description of the fort and the methods employed in reducing it, Lane-Poole's *Medieval India from Contemporary Sources*, pp. 61-64; Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V, pp. 328-331; and V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, pp. 86-90.

places by Akbar's heavy guns and mines and the gallant defender Jaimal himself was killed. The garrison now gave up hope. As usual, the women in the fort performed *jauhar* while the men rushed forth, with sword in hand, to die. After the battle, Akbar rode on an elephant into the city and ordered a general massacre of the population—a fact which shows that occasionally Akbar was as blood-thirsty as any of his Mughal ancestors.

With the fall of Chitor, the bulk of Rajputana was subdued, many Rajput princes receiving either high appointments, or giving their daughters in marriage to Akbar, or to the members of his family. The cowardly Rana Uday Singh who abandoned Chitor to its fate, died, a fugitive in the Aravalli Hills, four years after its fall.\* His brave son, Rana Pratap Singh, waged a long war with Akbar and contrived to recover possession of much of his ancestral kingdom. But the once glorious Chitor has ever since remained desolate. Akbar erected two statues in honour of Jaimal and Patta, the heroic defenders of Chitor, which he caused to be placed in the palace at Agra.

Akbar strengthened the fort at Ajmer which became the Mughal head-quarters in Rajputana and wherein was the famous tomb of Shaikh Muinud-din Chishti to which he went on an annual pilgrimage. In 1569, Akbar's first Rajput wife, who was a daughter of Raja Bihar Mall of Amber, gave birth to a son, who was named Salim, in honour of Shaikh Salim Chishti, a noted saint of Fathpur Sikri, as the Emperor believed that the son was granted to him by God owing to the efficacy of the holy saint's prayers. A second son, Murad, was born to the Emperor in 1570; and the third appeared in 1572. From the time of the birth of Prince Salim, Akbar made Fathpur Sikri the principal residence of his court; he built there a huge artificial lake which ensured an abundant supply of water to the city whose great palaces and edifices are even now intact. The city itself was abandoned by the Emperor after 1585; and his successors never resided therein. In

\* Ishwari Prasad denies this charge. The Rana retired to the hills on the advice of his chiefs.

1569, Rantambhor was taken and Kalanjar in Bundelkhand also opened its gates. Akbar now desired to extend his dominions to the sea on both sides.

His next campaign was against Gujarat. This country had been but half-subdued by Humayun. In the time of Akbar Padshah, it was a hot-bed of sedition against Delhi. The Mirzas who had been punished and disgraced by the Emperor, fled to Gujarat where they created disorders. At the invitation of Itimad Khan, one of the nobles, Akbar went to Gujarat and, after a few months' fighting, definitely annexed it to his empire. Muzaffar Shah, a trustworthy noble, was placed in charge of affairs there. The annexation of Gujarat brought an immense revenue to Akbar, as he was able to control the rich sea-borne commerce of Surat, Cambay and other ports. He also came in contact, thereby, with the Portuguese, "thus opening up relations which seriously affected the history of India and introduced new influences operating upon his mind." He had also to repeat his invasion of the province in order to put down the remnants of resistance which were intensified by the rebellion of a pretender of the former ruling family.

In the meantime, affairs in Bengal were taking a serious turn and demanded the attention of Akbar. The Afghan nobles of Hindustan found in Bengal a safe asylum; and they were making the position of Daud Khan, the last of the Kirani rulers of the province, so dangerous that he appealed to Akbar for aid against them. The latter put down the rebellions and restored order in Bengal. But Daud Khan foolishly imagined that he was powerful enough to rule the country without the aid of Akbar, and showed signs of insubordination and even independence. This brought the Mughal forces to Bengal and, notwithstanding that it was winter when all military operations ceased, Daud Khan was defeated in two engagements, one at Tukaroi in 1575, and the other at Rajmahal in July 1576. In the second battle Daud Khan was killed and Bengal became a regular province of the empire.

War against  
Gujarat  
(1572-1573)

The Afghans of  
Bengal (1574-76)

While the Bengal war was in progress, Akbar felt constrained to invade Rajputana once again. The chief cause of this expedition was that he could not put up with the defiant attitude of Rana Pratap Singh who chose to remain outside the empire. Pratap was the heroic son of the Udai Singh who had left Chitor when it was attacked by the Mughals earlier in the reign. The system of inter-marriage between the Rajput and Mughal royal families was hateful to this proud Rajput. The immediate cause of the war was the refusal of Pratap Singh to grant an interview to Raja Man Singh of Amber, a tried friend of Akbar, who had also given him a military command. Rajput annalists relate that in this war of revenge, Akbar employed against Pratap "his kindred in faith as well as blood", such as the princes of Marwar, Amber, Bikaner and even his own brother Sagarji.\*

The object of the imperial forces, commanded by Raja Man Singh, was to take possession of the Rajput fortress Gogunda, in the southern region of the Aravallis. The brave and patriotic Rana took his stand with three thousand horsemen at the pass of Haldighat, leading to Gogunda. The battle itself took place in June 1576 near the village of Khamnaur. In the course of the struggle the Rana was wounded and fled to the mountain fastnesses taking with him the ladies of the royal family. The Mughals now overran the whole country and took all the fortresses. Later on, Pratap Singh recovered "all Mewar, excepting Chitor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh." He died in 1597.

By the year 1580, Akbar was master of all the great fortresses in Northern India and his empire extended from sea to sea. Southward, Akbar's domination reached the Tapti. The next year, 1581, was a critical one in his career. Akbar's religious policy which will be described later on, was disliked by the orthodox Muslims and elaborate plots were hatched in Bengal and Bihar, which aimed at placing on the throne his half-brother, Muhammad Hakim, who,

\* V. A. Smith: *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 151.

though he was only Akbar's viceroy at Kabul was practically independent. It required all the genius, cunning and ability of the great Emperor to put down all this rebellion and discontent. The ring-leader of this movement was Akbar's treasurer, Shah Mansur. The conspiracy would have succeeded but for the utter worthlessness of Akbar's brother, Muhammad Hakim, who was 'a drunken sot.' Akbar now resolved to punish his brother and advanced with a great army to Kabul. On the way, the traitor Shah Mansur was hanged. When the imperial army reached Kabul, Hakim fled into the hills. Akbar then made over the province to his sister, who subsequently permitted Hakim to return to Kabul.

The other expeditions of Akbar may be briefly noted. In 1583 he built the fort of Allahabad at the junction of the Ganga and the Jumna—a wise measure which secured for him an important strategical position. In 1586 he reduced the country of Kashmir, then ruled by Yusuf Shah and annexed it to the empire. In 1591, Southern Sindh became part and parcel of Akbar's kingdom. Orissa was conquered in 1592. The conquest of Baluchistan in 1594 paved the way for the re-acquisition of Kandahar also.

Now that Akbar had consolidated his position in Northern India, he had time to look to the affairs of the Deccan. In the Deccan, there were now four important Muhammadan states, viz., Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda. The first of these states played fast and loose with the Emperor; and when embassies were sent to the Deccan Sultanates, Khandesh made a pretence of submission. The other kingdoms, although exhausted and tired owing to civil discords and interstate warfare, had the temerity to refuse to acknowledge Akbar as their liege lord. Their attitude of sullen independence was no doubt prompted by their distance from Delhi and other Mughal military centres. Akbar was therefore determined on war; and he first undertook the subjection of Ahmadnagar which was close to the boundaries of the

Delhi empire and then of Bijapur or Golconda. Prince Murad, then governor of Gujarat, and Abdur Rahim, the Khan Khanan, and son of the murdered Bairam Khan, proceeded to invest Ahmadnagar (1595).

Chand Bibi

But that place was bravely defended by Chand Bibi, a gallant princess. In the words of Ferishta, "Chand Bibi appeared with a veil on her head. She caused guns to be brought to bear on the assailants and stones to be hurled on them, so that they were repulsed in several repeated attacks. During the night she stood by the workmen and caused the nine-foot breach to be filled up before daylight with wood, stones and earth and dead carcasses." The defence then was so brave that the Mughals were glad to open negotiations with Chand Bibi who agreed to cede Berar to Akbar. But Ahmadnagar was to enjoy no peace. The authority of Chand Bibi was questioned. She was hurled down from power and an attempt was made to recover Berar. Thus war broke out once again. In 1597, Abdur Rahim, Khan Khanan, was sent with a force to take the field. The Ahmadnagar forces were now defeated at Supa, on the Godavari. The capital fell into the hands of the Mughals; but the dynasty of the Nizam Shahis lingered on for some time more.

Akbar's last military enterprise was in the region of Khandesh. Raja Ali Khan, its ruler, died in the midst of

The siege of  
Asirgarh

the Ahmadnagar struggle, bravely fighting on the side of the Emperor. He was succeeded by his son, Miran Bahadur Shah, who was not disposed to remain loyal to the Delhi throne. Akbar therefore crossed the Narmada, occupied Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh,\* and began the siege of Asirgarh, deemed to be the most impregnable fortress in the whole of India. For six months Akbar's forces strove in vain before the ramparts of Asirgarh. The brave defenders of the place were helped considerably by Portuguese renegades who conducted operations within the fort. At last, tired of waiting before the fort, Akbar inveigled Miran Bahadur to an interview and in gross violation of a promise, not to molest him, imprisoned him. Even then the defen-

\* V.A. Smith : *Oxford History of India*, p. 363.



ders did not lose heart. It was by bribery and treachery that the gates of Asirgarh were finally thrown open to Akbar. Khandesh was now annexed; and this and Berar and a part of Ahmadnagar were constituted into separate provinces with Prince Daniyal ruling over them as viceroy.

We shall now summarise briefly the military results of Akbar's reign. When he came to the throne in 1556, he was the ruler of Central and Southern

Summary  
of Akbar's  
conquests

Afghanistan, he was also in military occupation of the Upper Punjab, and the tracts round Delhi and Agra. At his death, Akbar was the undisputed master of the whole of Hindustan north of the Vindhya, including Kashmir. The power of the Afghans in Bengal and Bihar had broken down. 'On the southern slopes of the Vindhya he had acquired a *point d'appui* for the conquest of Southern India.' The territories which he thus acquired and consolidated were organised into

The subahs of the  
empire

eighteen *subahs* or provinces. These were:—(1) Kabul, (2) Lahore, (3) Multan, (4) Delhi, (5) Agra, (6) Oudh, (7) Allahabad, (8) Ajmer, (9) Gujarat, (10) Malwa, (11) Bihar, (12) Bengal, (13) Khandesh, (14) Berar, (15) Ahmadnagar, (16) Orissa, (17) Kashmir, and (18) Sindh. Of these a few formed only minor *subahs*.

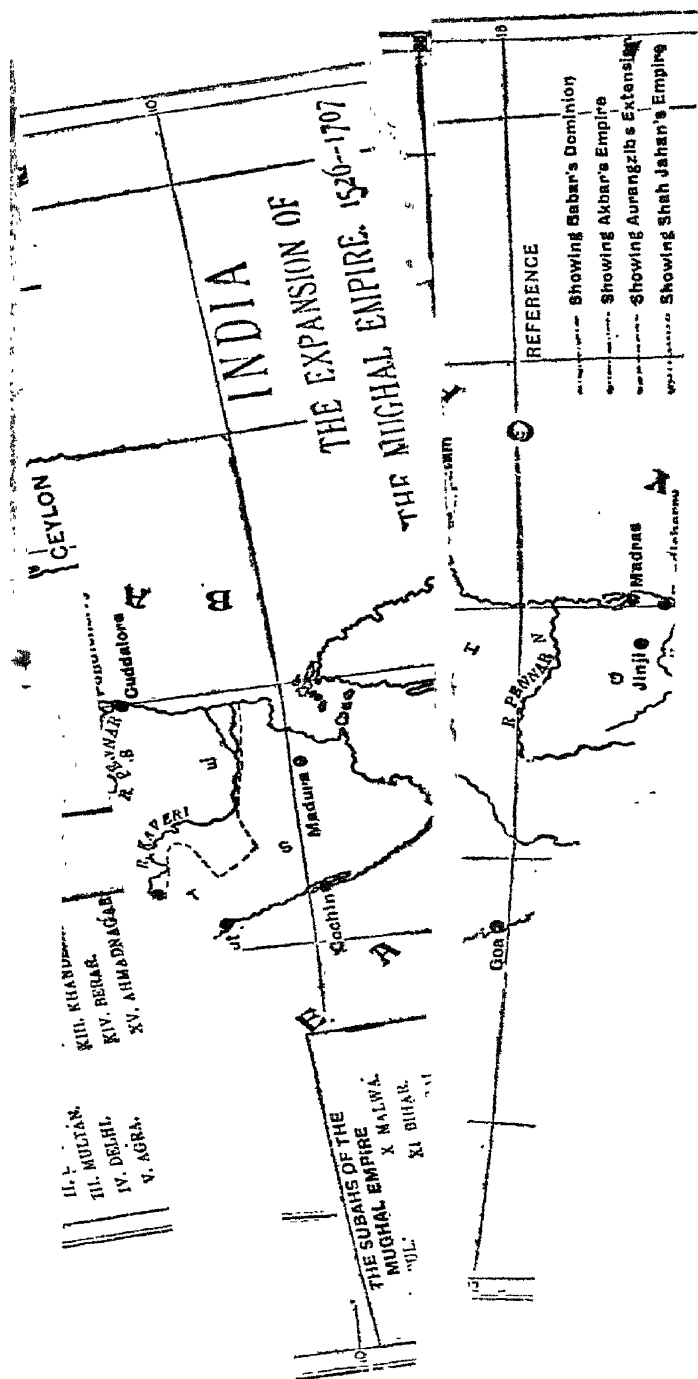
## B. RELIGIOUS EXPERIMENTS

War can build an empire, but it is good and sound administration alone that can maintain it. Akbar realised this truth very well. Very early in his reign he perceived that he should not merely be the feudal lord of Mughal aristocracy, but should be the true king of all Hindustan. His Hindu subjects vastly outnumbered his Muhammadan followers.

No government, thought Akbar, could remain permanent, if it alienated the sympathy and the political goodwill of the Hindus, particularly the most

Akbar and the  
Rajputs

chivalrous and warlike section among them, *viz.*, the Rajputs. "And it was not so much through the Hindus in general as through the Rajputs in particular, that he determined to be master in





Hindustan of Muslim and Hindu alike.”\* He therefore married several Rajput ladies belonging to the most chivalrous Rajput clans. In these marriages are to be found the real foundations of Akbar’s domestic policy. Influenced by his surroundings, Akbar abolished the unjust imposition levied on the Hindus and non-Muslims known as *jaziya* and appointed Rajputs and other Hindus of character and proved ability to high posts in the empire. It was thus that Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh who were great Rajput nobles, Raja Todar Mal the Khatri, and Raja Birbal rose to great power and influence in the empire. The great merit of Akbar’s administration was, in a large measure, due to his employment of Hindus who, unlike the Muhammadan adventurers, mere soldiers of fortune then, were well trained in the art of government.

Hindus in high offices

The strangest and the most interesting episodes connected with Akbar are to be found in his establishment of a new faith. His policy of admitting Rajput wives into his harem and permitting them to worship god in their own way, to some extent undermined his faith in Islam. However, till 1574, he continued in all outward respects to be a good Muslim, reading the *Quran* regularly and visiting the tombs of saints.

Akbar’s early faith

But in that year there came to his court a very learned man, Abul Fazl, between whom and the Emperor an affectionate and intimate friendship sprang up. Abul Fazl was the son of Shaikh Mubarak of Nagor who was very learned, but considered by the orthodox Muslims a heretic.

At that time many people believed in the doctrine of the millennium; i.e., after the expiration of a thousand years of the Prophet’s teaching, there would appear the last Imam, the Imam Madhi, who would restore the faith to its pristine purity. Akbar’s reign covered a good part of the last century of the millennium and many learned men were seriously concern-

Shaikh Mubarak and the doctrine of the Millennium

ed about the question. Several persons had arisen in India claiming to be Mahdis and attempted to draw over the multitude to their side. Shaikh Mubarak was a Mahdawi or believer in the doctrine, and soon acquired a wide circle of intelligent pupils. The leaders of the orthodox Ulema were bitter towards both non-Muhammadans and dissenting Muslims; and the Makhdum-ul-Mulk who was the head of the orthodox party and leader of the state-church, was eager to punish Mubarak who sought the protection of Mirza Aziz Kokah, Akbar's foster-brother. He was a mystic by temperament; and discarding the orthodox Muslim conception of God, ever a judge, never a familiar, he embraced Sufism, a form of pantheistic mysticism within Islam itself.

It was in this new atmosphere that Shaikh Mubarak brought up his two sons, Faizi (born 1547) and Abul Fazl (born 1551). Faizi was an excellent poet and was summoned to court by Akbar in 1567. Seven years later, Abul Fazl sought the presence of Akbar. In his earlier years he had to struggle against poverty and live the life of a recluse. A mystic like his father, his mind was ever restless. Of his mental condition and the circumstance of his introduction to the court, he writes thus in his *Akbar namah*. "Happily for myself, when I passed the nights in lonely spots with true seekers after truth, and enjoyed the society of such as are empty-handed, but rich in mind and heart, my eyes were opened and I saw the selfishness and covetousness of the so-called learned. \* \* \*; my mind had no rest, and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits of Lebanon; I longed for interviews with the Lamas of Tibet or with the Padris of Portugal and would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zend Avesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land. My brother and other relatives then advised me to attend the court, hoping that I would find in the Emperor a leader to the sublime world of thought."\* Abul Fazl acted on the advice of his well-wishers and was richly benefited. Contemporaries of Akbar were agreed that it

Abul Fazl at  
Akbar's court

\* Blochmann: *Ain-i-Akbari*; (tr.), Vol. F. p. xii.

was this learned Sufi that encouraged Akbar to wander away from the true creed of Islam. The **His views on religion** "Divine Monotheism" founded later on by Akbar so closely resembled the creed of Abul Fazl that no apology is needed to quote the following lines which admirably summed up the latter's view of religion :

"O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee,  
and in every language I hear spoken, people praise  
Thee ! Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee.

Each religion says, "Thou are one, without equal."

"If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer,  
and if it be a Christian church, people ring the  
bell from love to Thee.

"Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and some-  
times the mosque.

"But it is Thou whom I search from temple to  
temple

"Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or  
orthodoxy, for neither of them stands behind the  
screen of Thy truth.

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox.

"But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of  
the perfume-seller."

Influenced then by Abul Fazl and prompted as well by the political necessity of religious toleration, Akbar began flouting the Muslim divines and **The Ibadat-Khana** faith, covertly at first and openly later on. Between 1574 and 1582 he spent his spare time in the *Ibadat-Khana*, or House of Worship, at Fathpur-Sikri, discussing the merits of the various religions of the world. To this *House* were invited 'Sufis, Doctors, Preachers, Lawyers, Sunnis, Shiahs, Brahmans, Jains, Buddhists, Charbaks, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and learned men of every other belief. The Emperor frequently took an animated part in these discussions which embittered him against the orthodox Ulemas. The cause of orthodox Muhammadanism must have been inadequately

and inefficiently represented indeed by Moulvis who met arguments more by bluster and violence than by reason and logic. It is said that Akbar showed a marked predilection to Christianity as expounded by Father Rudolf at these meetings.\* It is indeed true that Akbar received from time to time Catholic missionaries from Goa, the three most illustrious among them being Fathers Rudolf Aquaviva, Antonio Monserrate and Francis Henrick.

According to Badaoni, the orthodox historian of the reign, Akbar came to be attracted towards Farangi priests, even as early as 1575; and the first Jesuit missions at Akbar's Court Catholic missionary actually arrived at court in 1578. On the suggestion of the latter, Akbar sent an envoy to Goa requesting the despatch of a mission. Father Aquaviva headed this mission which reached Akbar's court in 1580, a time of great interest in the development of his religious policy. The missionaries at first fondly hoped that they could achieve the conversion of the king and the kingdom; but Akbar's primary concern was his personal faith and a search into the tenets of all religions. It is not to be supposed, however, that the religion of the Galilean made any impression upon the mind of Akbar. His warm reception of the Portuguese missionaries was partially prompted by the desire to obtain their guns and military help in connection with his campaigns and partially by his insatiable thirst for knowledge. Two other Jesuit missions were sent to Akbar in the succeeding years of the reign. They were not more successful in their aim than their predecessor in their primary object of conversion; but the records left by the Jesuit priests are very authoritative sources for some of the events of the reign.

As a result of the religious discussions in the House of Worship, Akbar lost his faith in the Ulema or body of Muhammadan divines; and at the suggestion of Abul Fazl's father, he himself assumed the Pontificate, *i.e.*, the Padshah "became the spiritual as well as the temporal

\* C. J. Payne: *Akbar and the Jesuits* (Brookway Travellers).  
E. D. MacLagan: *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (1931).

head of his people." The document announcing this intention of Akbar is aptly termed by the learned historian, V. A. Smith, as the "Infallibility Decree." Abul Fazl and Shaikh Mubarak persuaded Akbar of the 'lawfulness of sovereignty by the grace of God'; and they convinced him that he was the rightful Mujahid, and the infallible authority in all matters of religion; and therefore he could rightfully deprive other authorities, like the Ulema, of the right of exposition of the law and vest it in himself. "Hitherto the office of the Mujahid had belonged to the Ulema; from the time that Akbar assumed it, the holder of the supreme temporal power was to be indued with the highest spiritual functions likewise."\* A decree which was signed by all the leaders of the Ulema, was promulgated early in 1579 (987 A. H.); and the latter agreed to abide by the decisions of the Just King (Akbar) in all religious questions and disputes. This decree was the death-blow of their ascendancy and made the breach between them and the Emperor irremediable. Their supremacy was shattered; their leaders were sent into banishment; and Islam did not continue to appear as the state religion. The political significance of this decree as removing from the Emperor's autocracy, the check of the Ulema, is remarkable.

Badaoni, a contemporary Muslim historian and an orthodox and narrow-minded scholar, bewails the Emperor's lack of faith in the religion of Holy Islam and says that "matters had come to such a pass that a request to make the pilgrimage to Mecca would have

Anti-Muslim  
tendencies of  
Akbar

Count Noer: *The Emperor Akbar*: tr. by A. S. Beveridge, Vol. I, pp. 317-21, Akbar even mounted the pulpit of the Jami Musjid of Fathpur-Siari and recited from it the Khutbah. He also recited the poem that Faizi had composed for the occasion. The verses are as follows:—

"The Lord has given me the empire,  
And a wise heart and a strong arm,  
He has guided me in righteousness and in justice,  
And has removed from my thoughts everything but justice,  
His praise surpasses man's understanding,  
Great is His power, Allahu Akbar."

The concluding words cannot, in their possible interpretation, but have been "an abomination to the priests."



subjected the asker to capital punishment." Nay, he went even further. He issued edict after edict, every one of which was an insult to Muhammadanism. He is said to have discouraged even the naming of children after Muhammad, the Prophet; the construction of new mosques in the country was stopped and patronage for the existing ones was withheld. Such ridiculous extremes like these resulted later on in the reaction of Aurangzib.\*

Among the theologians who in some way contributed towards the moulding of Akbar's peculiar religious thought were the venerable Parsi, Dastur Meherjee Rana, a leading exponent of the Zoroastrian faith, and the eminent Jain *Guru*, Hiravijaya Suri. "The Dastur taught Akbar the peculiar terms, ordinances, rites and ceremonies of his creed, laying stress, above all things, on the duty of reverencing the sun and fire. A sacred fire, prepared according to Parsi rites, was started accordingly in the palace and made over to the charge of Abul Fazl who was held responsible that it should never be extinguished."† The Jains of Akbar's reign, on the other hand, claimed to have converted the Emperor. The many regulations issued by Akbar prohibiting or restricting the use of flesh may be due to the influence of the Jain teachers at the court of Akbar.

The fantastic experiments of Akbar in the domain of religion ultimately resulted in his founding a new order:—

**The Din Ilahi**      The *Din Ilahi* or Divine Faith, the essence of which was expressed in the formula: "There is no God beside God, and Akbar is God's representative." In his new scheme of things there was no place for Muhammad the Prophet, and his seat was taken by the Emperor himself. This was not liked either by his Hindu or Muhammadan courtiers; and Bhagawan Das and Man Singh boldly refused to join the new faith.

\* Ishwari Prasad (*Short History of Muslim Rule in India*) discredits this account of anti-Muslim measures (which rests only on the evidence of Badaoni and the Jesuits). Such action would be inconsistent with the tolerant temper of Akbar.

Abul Fazl (the arch-flatterer) however became the high priest of this new religion. Akbar wisely refrained from compelling his courtiers to embrace it. Muhammadan writers claim that Akbar always continued to be a Muslim, though he discarded the ceremonial of Islam. The letters of the Jesuit missions assert that Akbar was not a true Muslim. An official account of the Divine Faith is given by Abul Fazl in his *Ain-i-Akbari*; he describes the ordinances observed by members of the order which forbade the slaughter of cows, and embodied many Jain, Hindu and Parsi practices. The organisation became weak after the death of Abul Fazl and completely disappeared after Akbar who would not, however, force it on anybody. The dream of a Divine Faith was not an ignoble dream; it stressed on one God, one object of worship for all the varying creeds and sects. It enjoined toleration of all faiths, though it was in reality somewhat hostile to Islam. It was to have united all, but actually pleased none. Akbar was "self-deceived and magnified his success with time-servers and flatterers"; and he had not the genius of a religious leader.\*

Consequently its adherents were not many. The religion died with Akbar. V. A. Smith characterises the 'Divine Faith' as a monument of Akbar's folly, not of his wisdom, 'the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy.'† One result—however insignificant—of Akbar's eclecticism was the interest which he caused to be taken by Muslims in Hinduism and its vast and spacious literature.

### C. REFORMS

The large empire of Akbar was divided into fifteen provinces or *subahs*, before his Deccan conquests. Over each *subah* was placed a governor, the *subahdar* or *sipahsalar* as he was later

\* Laurence Binyon's *Akbar* (1932), pp. 132-4.

† For details concerning the Divine Faith, the reader is referred to the interesting pages of V. A. Smith's *Akbar the Great Mogul*, Chapter VIII; to Blochmann's Translation of the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Ain 77) (pp. 166 *et seq.* of Vol. I). Smith's criticism is too severe. Akbar's motive was political—to set up a common creed and unite his subjects. See also Sri Ram Sharma: *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, (1941).

called. He was the vicegerent of the Emperor and was responsible for the civil and military administration of the area under his charge. Each province was sub-divided into districts, governed by officers, called *faujdars*, who were the deputies of the *subahdar*. It was the duty of the *faujdar* to reduce rebellions in the district and to enforce the collection of the revenues. In big-sized towns, the work of policing was entrusted to special officers, the *kotwals*. The latter had vast powers and could severely punish those who infringed the imperial regulations.

Akbar had a genius for organisation, although autocracy was the only form of government recognised by him. His originality in the field of administration consisted in the recognition of the principle that both Hindus and Muhammadans should be eligible for the highest offices in the state, civil or military. He endeavoured to conciliate every section of the people and to make their power his own strength. "His treatment of conquered foes, fallen enemies, humbled rebels, turbulent officers, all pointed to one policy and one aim, which was peace for all and with all."\*

Akbar organised his government with the aim of securing solidarity; and he was capable not only of grasping the broad and original principles of government essential for the stability of the empire, but also of devoting laborious attention to detail. He made a radical departure from "the tradition of the Muslim jurists and the example of other Islamic states." He did away with the principle of one all-powerful Vazir in the empire, and divided the powers of government among four ministers of nearly equal rank. He selected his ministers from all classes of the population, Hindu and Muslim alike; and he held regular councils of ministers and high nobles. The four ministers were like four pillars of the imperial structure, which, however, did not support it, but only added to its dignity and majesty. Even ministers had to

\* Ibn Hasan: *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, (1936), p. 349.

act according to fixed regulations, though the Emperor had, of course, the power to act as he pleased. The ministers enjoyed perfect security during their terms of office; and all the officials knew their duties and routine. The Emperor centralised all real power in his hands; and even the chief minister lacked independent power. "It was this lack of power and the rigidity of the system in this matter which made the machinery unworkable when the king ceased to be its motive power."\*

The Emperor was, constitutionally, an absolute monarch and his will was the law. Akbar ignored the traditional restraints on Muslim kingship. He regulated his own hours of work; and this feature became a tradition in the dynasty. He effaced all differences in status between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, removed the idea of a purely Muslim state and established complete toleration. He also brought about a closer contact between himself and every class of the people by appearing in daily *darbar* where he was accessible even to the meanest of his subjects, by making extensive tours in different parts of the empire and by showing a keen interest in the traditions and customs of the people and observing their great festivals like the *Divali* and the *Dusserah*. Akbar's conquests were always followed by a policy of conciliation, particularly of the local chiefs. He organised the country into provinces and established in all of them uniform administrative systems and institutions. On the other hand, several defects have been pointed out in his government. The most serious of them was the over-centralisation and dependence of government on the Emperor. A second was the aggressive policy of conquest, particularly of the Deccan, which he began and which left an unfinished task to his successors. A third was the absence of any national spirit in the country, which even he failed to construct. "It was the force of the personalities of Akbar and his immediate successors and the fortunate accident of their long lives which contributed to the achievements of their

*Ibid*, p. 356. It was the chief cause which created complications under Shah Jahan, when he was overcome by his failing health and led to the tragic close of his reign.

dynasty and the prosperity of the country and kept in check all the disintegrating elements in the higher and the lower ranks."

Akbar was assisted by many officers in the actual work of the government. These were mere servants of the autocratic sovereign and not ministers tendering bold advice to the king. Chief among the ministers Akbar's officers were (1) the Vakil or prime-minister, (2) the finance minister, also called the Diwan, (3) the Bakshi who was in charge of the military department and was also assigned miscellaneous work of an important character such as getting recruits, selecting the higher officers of the government, controlling the palace guards, and maintaining the pay-roll, and (4) the Sadr, who before 1582 was the highest ecclesiastical officer, a sort of a chief inquisitor and the head of the judiciary. There was a minister in charge of the imperial factories and stores.

Akbar's genius for organization is best seen in his military reforms. It should be noted that the Mughal state had no regular standing army directly financed by it. The army was furnished by the high dignitaries of the government called mansabdars. Akbar retained the custom and put down the corruption practised by these officers. The pay and conditions of service of these officers were carefully regulated and every effort was made to maintain a high state of efficiency of the troops mustered. Akbar classified his military officers into 33 grades ranging from mansabdars of 10 to mansabdars of 10,000, the highest grades being reserved to members of the royal family. As overlord of all, the king took care to see that all the soldiers by whomsoever brought, looked up to him for commands. As far as possible, the system of granting jaghirs for military services was discouraged and payment in cash was substituted. To prevent fraud in muster, every horse brought to the field was branded with the Emperor's stamp. The promotion and appointment of mansabdars depended solely on the will of the Emperor; and "no incident of the dignity was heritable." The number of men actually supplied by the

*mansabdars* usually fell far short of the number indicated by their rank; and most of the men

**The system of mansabdars** brought their own horses. "In later

times the rank became purely honorary so far as supplying contingents was concerned,"\* Notwith-

standing all these improvements, Akbar's army was weak and, according to Dr. Smith, "could not have stood for a moment against the better kinds of contemporary European troops."

There were supplementary troops maintained by the state

**Other elements of the army** and placed under the mansabdars. Besides, there was also a body of gentlemen-troopers who had a separate organi-

sation of their own. Special attention was devoted to the making of cannon and of match-locks in the imperial factories. The infantry troops were of little account; and the Emperor relied on large bodies of irregular horsemen, besides the feudal contingents of the *mansabdars*. Elephants were maintained in large numbers; and archers and musketeers fought from their backs. The movement of the army was greatly encumbered by the unwieldiness of the camp which was extravagantly laid out and looked like a moving city.

The reign of Akbar has become very prominent on account of a system of scientific taxation of land inaugurated by his famous Hindu finance minister,

**Revenue administration** Raja Todar Mall. Divested of technical details, the reform of Todar Mall consist-

ed in a careful measurement of the land on the basis of uniform measures and of the *bigha* which was 3,600 square *gaz*, the classification of such land according to the different degrees of fertility and the final fixing of assessment due from each class of land. The financier rigorously followed the policy of making deductions for lands that had remained uncultivated for various periods; "For lands which had lain waste four years, they were to receive a deduction of one-half for the first year, for the second year one-quarter

\* Blochmann's *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 236, *et seq* (Ain 3 on *Mansabdars*); Irvine's *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, Chap. I; and Dasarath Sharma's *Akbar's Cavalry* in the *Journal of Indian History*, V. ff.; and the papers of C. K. Rao Saheb and W. H. Moreland in the same Journal, Vols. XIV and XV, will give the reader an idea of the complications of the organization.

and for the third year they were to pay according to established rule. For lands which had lain untilled for two years, they were to receive a deduction of one-fourth for the first year. For uncultivated land, they were to receive a small allowance of grain so as to make the lands capable of yielding revenue." It should be noted that Raja Todar Mall was not original in many of his reforms. Sher Shah had already led the way; and the system of that enlightened Afghan ruler was applied on a larger scale to the empire; and, early in the reign of Akbar, Muzaffar Khan had undertaken reforms. In 1571, he and Todar Mall prepared a revised assessment of land-revenue based on the accounts of the *kanungos* and village officials. The revenue system of Akbar closely resembled the modern *ryotwari* system, according to which the tenant pays his rent directly to the government without the intervention of middlemen. Todar Mall first made a revenue settlement in Gujarat and later extended it to Northern India in 1579. The settlement could not be made annually as was originally intended, but was made for a term of ten years, on the basis of the average produce for the previous decade. Akbar allowed the taxes to be paid both in kind and money, whichever suited best the convenience of the tax-payer. A host of vexatious taxes, numbering more than 150, were done away with. Akbar reformed the coinage of the country. He called in all old and worn out coins and issued fresh ones. He established mints, four in number, at Agra, Ahmadabad, Kabul and the capital of Bengal, from which alone gold coins were to be issued. About the same time Akbar divided the empire—excluding Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat—into a number of fiscal areas, each of which was to yield a crore of *tankahs* ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of rupees); and each area was put under an officer, known as the *amil* or *krori*. The system was not a success and was soon given up.

Currency  
reforms

Each of the *subahs*, or governorships, was divided into *sarkars* or districts; and each *sarkar* was an aggregate of *parganahs* or *mahals*. This reform of the administration

was effected about 1580 when there were twelve subahs in the empire.\*

Akbar's court was a brilliant one. It contained some of the most eminent men of the period. Mention has already been made of Abul Fazl, a polished writer of verses and author of the *Akbar-Namah*, a history of the Mughals, and that valuable book, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, from which we mainly derive our knowledge of the social and economic condition of India in the sixteenth century. There were again Sur Das, 'the blind bard of Agra,' and Tansen, a famous musician employed by the court, of whom Abul Fazl wrote that "a singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years." Akbar's reign witnessed a brilliant development of Hindi poetry, the best exponent of which was the immortal Tulsi Das. Although he was not brought to the notice of Akbar, it was during his reign that he composed his *Ramayana*. Of him says Dr. V. A. Smith: 'Yet

Tulsi Das that Hindu was the greatest man of his age in India, (greater even than Akbar himself) inasmuch as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women effected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all of the victories gained in war by the monarch." To the policy of religious toleration practised by Akbar must be attributed an extraordinary revival of Hindu religious literature. Akbar's interest in Samskrit literature was in keeping with his avowed state policy; and he caused Persian translations of the *Maha-*

**Literature** *bharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Atharva Veda* and the *Lilavathi* (a Hindu treatise on Arithmetic) to be prepared. The great Mughal Emperor, though he was said to be illiterate by some writers, possessed a fine library of 24,000 choice books and finely illuminated manuscripts. Calligraphy was highly patronised.

From his youth Akbar took a keen interest in painting. He disregarded the Quranic injunction against the artistic use of images and freely employed Persian masters to paint portraits for him. He himself was the founder of the Indo-Persian

**Arts** Dr. Saran's *Provincial Government of the Mughals* (1941) is very valuable.



school of pictorial art. In his fondness for the Persian art he did not forget indigenous talent. Of the seventeen distinguished artists of the court mentioned by Abul Fazl, thirteen were Hindus, which, according to Dr. Smith, demonstrates the continued existence of Hindu schools of painting throughout the epoch.

Akbar, like other Mughals, was indeed a great builder. The splendid fort at Agra was his work. He also built the famous palace at Fathpur-Sikri and a graceful tomb for his father near Delhi. Many of Akbar's civil buildings have unfortunately decayed. Mr. W. H. Moreland has given in his very instructive book—*India at the Death of Akbar*—a good picture of the economic condition of India at the beginning of the seventeenth century, both on the basis of Indian sources like the *Ain-i-Akbari* and on that of the records of European travellers and trading companies. He describes the details and features of agriculture and trade and of the organisation of industry and tells us that the upper classes were able to live much more luxuriously than now, the middle classes were smaller in number and unimportant and the condition of the lower classes was even harder and poorer than at present.\*

The last days of the Emperor ended in gloom. Two of his children died before him; and the only surviving son, Prince Salim, proved ungrateful and even hostile. As usual, there were discords in the imperial family, and Salim had to be conciliated into loyalty to his father on more than one occasion. Akbar's intimate friends, who formed his court and added lustre to it, all pre-deceased him. Broken-hearted, the Emperor died in 1605. Akbar's claim to be entitled the Great rests on the fact that he, more than any other sovereign, realised that the prosperity of his subjects was the prosperity of the state. He welded the two great

\* "Productive enterprise was penalised.....Producers were at the mercy of an administration conducted by men who were accustomed to extremes of luxury and display...the demand of the upper classes for luxuries and novelties led to the patronage and encouragement of foreign merchants...and the foreigners pursued indeed a strictly self-regarding policy." Moreland, pp. 299-300 These conclusions of Moreland are questioned in Chabliani's *Economic Condition of India in the 16th Century*.

communities of India, the Hindus and the Muhammadans, into one united nation. Bigotry was exhibited subsequent to his death by both the sects, but never on such a large scale as to affect the even tenour of their life. In fine, Akbar "was a born king of men, with a rightful claim to rank as one of the greatest sovereigns known to history. That claim rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary natural gifts, his original ideas, and his magnificent achievements. *It is weakened, rather than strengthened, by the adulation of uncritical admirers.*"\*

Last days of  
Akbar

\* V. A. Smith : *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 353. The italics are ours.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EMPIRE AT ITS ZENITH— THE REIGNS OF JAHANGIR (1605–1627) AND OF SHAH JAHAN (1627–1658)

#### SECTION I. THE REIGN OF JAHANGIR (1605–1627)

Prince Salim, the eldest son of Akbar, ascended the throne on October 14, 1605, with the title of Jahangir. In point of character he presented a striking contrast to his father against whom he had revolted. Somewhat violent in temper, ever fond of the cup and addicted to opium, he had neither the iron will nor the untiring energy of his renowned father. Jahangir was essentially a lover of ease and left state business to be conducted by his famous wife, Nur Jahan. But he was one of the most cultivated gentlemen of the age. He was free from bigotry\* and was endowed with sound common sense. He was not of an original bent of mind; but he had the sagacity to follow wisely his father's administrative arrangements. "At least of the natural sciences and a remarkable linguist for his station, he was familiar with Persian poetry, Islamic theology, Hindu philosophy and Christian scriptures, and was endowed with a fund of geographical knowledge and historical associations." † At his father's death, Jahangir inherited an empire which extended from the eastern confines of Persia to the western frontier of Assam and from the Himalayas down to very near the Godavari.

Jahangir began his rule well. Some of his early measures marked him out as a careful ruler. He forbade the levy of cesses and tolls in their estates by the *jaghirdars* who did so for their private gain and thus injured the internal trade of the country. The vexatious interference

\* Some scholars think that his religious toleration was born of an indifference to religion.

† Beni Prasad : *History of Jahangir*, (1922), p. 129.

with the commodities as they passed from one ~~market~~ to another was done away with. Numerous  
**Early rule** rest-houses, mosques, schools and hospitals were erected and maintained by the state. The property of those who died without heirs was used for the benefit of the public, for the maintenance of schools and inns, tanks and wells. The use of alcohol and tobacco was forbidden. Every Tuesday the Emperor sat in open court and even the poorest man could have access to him. Punishments were made less severe.

Soon after the accession of the Emperor, he was put to the necessity of suppressing a rebellion headed by his eldest son, Prince Khusrau. The latter hoped  
**Rebellion of Khusrau** that owing to the strained relations between Akbar and Prince Salim, the crown would ultimately devolve on him. Raja Man Singh had endeavoured to secure the succession for his nephew, Prince Khusrau, in supersession of Salim's claims; and when he was generously forgiven by the new Emperor, he demanded and got an assurance for the perfect safety and security of the Prince, as the one condition of his reconciliation. The new Emperor, though he became reconciled to his son, kept him in a sort of semi-confinement in the fort at Agra. From this Khusrau escaped (1606 A. D.) and hurried to the Punjab where he was joined by some followers. At Taran Taran he saw and received the benedictions of the Sikh Guru, Arjun Singh. He then invested Lahore which was defended bravely by the imperial governor, Dilawar Khan. In the meanwhile, the imperial forces came within striking distance of the place; a battle was fought at Bhairowal in which the ill-trained and ill-disciplined forces of Khusrau were routed. The Prince himself escaped with a handful of friends and, on the suggestion of one of them, went towards Kabul. But while attempting to cross a river in boats, the rebels were captured by the imperial guards and brought to the presence of Jahangir at Lahore. Terrible punishments awaited Khusrau's followers. Three hundred of them were impaled on gibbets, a long line of which was erected on both sides of the road

leading to Lahore; and to complete the misery, Prince Khusrau was ordered to ride on an elephant and witness the scene. As for the royal rebel, he was kept in prison till 1616 and then handed over to Asaf Khan who, in turn,

transferred him to the custody of Prince Khurram, the future Shah Jahan, who, it is believed, and him strangled one day in March 1622. Thus died a prince who was very popular and cultured, but fiery-tempered. It was his ill-judgment that brought him to ruin. In later times crowds of Muslims visited his tomb and he was revered as a martyr.

Among those who suffered for the follies of Khusrau was the Sikh Guru Arjun. He was born in 1563 and was the youngest son of the fourth Sikh Guru, Ram Das. Being very pious, he was selected to succeed his father in preference to his elder brother, Prithi Chand. As a teacher of religion, Arjun was popular and bold. It was he who collected the sayings and writings of his spiritual predecessors. The entire compilation including his own inspired compositions was known as the *Ali Granth*. This learned Guru also built a holy city, *Taran Taran*, constructed the temple of God (Har Mmdir) and dug the famous tank at Amritsar. He was now charged by Jahangir, at the instigation of Arjun's own jealous brother, with treason as he had helped Khusrau with some money and also blessed him. The saint offered a bold defence, but the Emperor sentenced him to death. "The melancholy transaction has been represented by Sikh tradition as the first of the long series of religious persecutions which the Khalsa suffered from the Mughal Emperors." But no other Sikhs seem to have been molested; and no prohibition of their faith was ordered. The whole affair "amounts to a single execution due primarily to political reasons." The revolt of Khusrau however, produced disturbances in Mutra and a few other places; and it indirectly encouraged the powerful Shah of Persia to make a bid for the capture of the very important fortress of *Qandahar* which had been conquered by Akbar in 1594, and which was to continue for

long to be a bone of contention between the Mughals of India and the rulers of Persia.\*

No incident in Jahangir's reign has attracted so much attention as his marriage with Nur Jahan who for full fifteen years swayed not only the Emperor, but his empire as well. Many fascinating legends exist in regard to her early life; but sober history records the following facts about her. Nur Jahan's grand-father was the *wazir* of Tatar Sultan Beglar Begi of Khorasan, a province of Persia. When he died in 1577, the family lost much of its prestige and influence. So his son, Ghiyas Beg, resolved to migrate to Hindustan. Taking with him his two sons, wife and daughter, he accompanied a caravan marching to India. On the way bandits took possession of all his property except his two mules. At Qandahar his wife gave birth to Nur Jahar (1577) whom they named Mehirunnisa. The leader of the caravan, a rich merchant, Malik Masud, took pity on Ghiyas Beg and escorted him to Agra where he was introduced to Akbar. Being a learned and honest man Ghiyas steadily rose from honour to honour. By 1595 he held a *mansab* of 300 and the important office of diwan of Kabul. Nur Jahan who had grown into a charming lass was given in marriage to a Persian adventurer, Ali Kuli, surnamed

Career of Sher  
Afkun

Sher Afkun † who was attached to Prince Salim. Jahangir when he came to the throne, gave him a *jaghir* in Bengal. But the Emperor suspected his loyalty and ordered Kutbu'd-din, governor of Bengal, to send Sher Afkun to his court and, in case of disobedience, to punish him suitably. In the interview that took place, a fight ensued in which both Sher Afkun and Kutbu'd-din lost their lives. Mehirunnisa, as Nur Jahan was called, was then sent to court and appointed as a lady-in-waiting to the dowager.

\* Qandahar was a great international mart for the merchants to Persia and India, Central Asia and Turkey. It occupied a very highly strategic situation as it controlled the Bolan Pass and served as one of the two natural bases of operations for a Persian or a Central Asian invasion of India.—Sarkar's *History of Aurangzib* V. I. (1912)—Ch. VII.

† Literally it means tiger-thrower.

empress, Sultan Salima Begam. "In March 1611, Jahangir happened to see her at the <sup>at the time of the spring</sup> vernal fancy bazaar, fell in love with her and married her towards the close of May."

From the time of her marriage down to the Emperor's death, Nur Jahan (the Light of the World) commanded and governed everything in the empire. She **Ascendancy of Nur Jahan** signed *farmans* jointly with the Emperor and her effigy appeared even on the coins. She elevated to high offices her father and brother, Asaf Khan. Her own daughter, by her first husband Sher Afkun, was given in marriage to the Emperor's youngest son, Shahryar. Thus Nur Jahan with the help of her near relatives formed a court clique and cleverly controlled the Emperor and the affairs of the country. This political ascendancy of Nur Jahan falls into two periods—the first from 1611 to 1622 when the Nur Jahan junto was in close alliance with Prince Khurram, the future Shah Jahan; and the second from 1622 to 1627 when the Emperor was a confirmed invalid and Nur Jahan and Shah Jahan parted company. "But it is a mistake to suppose that the emperor was reduced to a cipher. In the first place, all his principles of foreign and domestic policy, all his institutions of government were maintained. In the second place, the dominant clique closely studied his temperament and sought to manage him rather than rule him. In the third place, he continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of state and occasionally interposed with vigour against the <sup>dominant clique</sup> junto."\* This ascendancy of Nur Jahan quickly roused the bitter jealousy of the older nobility among whom the out-spoken Mahabat Khan was one. He vigorously protested against Jahangir's ways and implored him to shake off his wife's shackles. The Emperor was impressed with his arguments, but was utterly incapable of action. The affairs of the Deccan next attracted the attention of Jahangir.

It has been seen how Akbar made heroic efforts to subdue the kingdom of Ahmadnagar. The Deccan wars of Akbar led to no decisive result. Ahmadnagar, no doubt, was taken, but the kingdom could not be annexed. Moreover,

\* Beni Prasad: *History of Jahangir*, p. 195.

the fallen fortunes of Ahmadnagar were now sought to be revived by one of the ablest commanders that the Deccan had ever seen.

He was Malik Ambar, an Abyssinian adventurer, who had made the Deccan his home. By dint of hard work and honesty, he had made a mark in the politics of the Deccan and won an influential position in the counsels of the Nizam Shahi kings. On the fall of Ahmadnagar, he transferred the capital to Khadki and raised to the throne a scion of the reigning family, under the title of Murtuza Nizam Shah. He also introduced many administrative reforms on the model of Todar Mall's measures. He was resolved upon restoring the independence of Ahmadnagar and had the sagacity to realise the value of the Maratha horsemen whom he employed in large numbers in his army. Army after army sent by Jahangir was defeated by Malik Ambar who recovered much of the lost possessions of the Nizam Shahis. The mutual jealousies of the Mughal generals, the treachery of some of the imperial officials and the daring attacks of the Maratha horsemen who hurried the retreating Mughal troops, were mainly responsible for the Mughal failure in this war. It was in 1616 that Ahmadnagar again surrendered this time to Prince Khurram who, on account of his success, received the title of Shah Jahan. The brave Malik Ambar died in 1626.

In two other quarters also success attended the Mughal arms. In the previous section mention was made of the heroic struggle which Rana Pratap Singh waged all his life against the Mughals. He was succeeded by his son, Amar Singh, 'the tallest and strongest of all the princes of Mewar.' Jahangir inherited his father's hatred of the Rana and, in the very first year of his reign, despatched a large force against Mewar. It was not easy to break such a proved tribe as the Mewar Rajputs. Several expeditions were sent from time to time under Asaf Khan, Mahabat Khan and Raja Basu, with no great result. At last, in 1613, Prince Khurram took up the command

The Deccan war  
and Malik  
Ambar

War with Mewar  
and the submis-  
sion of Amar  
Singh



against Mewar. This prince conducted his campaign with great ability. Good fortune also did not desert him. His plan was to starve out the Rajputs in their mountain retreats; and it succeeded. The war-wearied nobles begged Amar Singh to sue for peace. With the greatest possible reluctance the Rana complied with their request and promised to render homage to the Mughal throne. The emperor was transported with joy when he heard the news of the submission of the Rana; and to his eternal credit, it should be said that he treated his erstwhile foe with all the honour due to him (1614).

The next notable military achievement of Jahangir was the capture (Nov. 1620) of the fortress of Kangra in the Punjab which had defied even Akbar. Jahangir who was proud of these military successes, received a rude shock when, two years later, Qandahar was forcibly taken possession of by Shah Abbas, the energetic ruler of Persia. Jahangir planned a big attack against it when he received news of Shah Jahan's revolt.

Shah Jahan had been sent again to the Deccan to restore the morale of the imperial army which had been driven as far north as Burhampur by the rebel forces of Ahmadnagar. He had stipulated, as a condition of his going, that his elder brother, Khusrau, should be made over to him, lest he should be used as a pawn in the political game by the ambitious Empress. The situation was so grave that Jahangir allowed him to have his own way. In the course of a few operations, Shah Jahan contrived to secure the submission of Malik Ambar and to raise the siege of Ahmadnagar by the enemy. His reputation was thus further raised; but it was followed by grave troubles. It is necessary to advert, then, to the imperial family feuds and their important bearing on the course of Mughal history.

Jahangir had four sons. The popular Khusrau was the eldest. He languished in prison and was later on strangled, it was widely rumoured, by Shah Jahan (1622). Thus was

removed one of the chief claimants to the throne. Prince

**The sons of Jahangir** Parwiz was the second son. He was a brave soldier, but a drunken sot. Prince

Khurram, surnamed Shah Jahan, was the third son and the ablest of all. He had married Mumtaz Mahal, a niece of Nur Jahan, and the daughter of her brother Asaf Khan, Shahryar was the fourth and last son of the Emperor; and he had married the daughter of Nur Jahan by her first husband, the unfortunate Sher Afkun, already alluded to. The Empress was manipulating the politics of the court in such a way as would secure the crown for her son-in-law, Shahryar. Asaf Khan, on the other hand, while pretending to fall in with the views of his sister, was manœuvring secretly on behalf of his son-in-law, Shah Jahan.

It has been observed already that Nur Jahan was attached to Shah Jahan down to 1622. In that year took

**Rivalry of Prince Khurram and Nur Jahan** place the marriage between Shahryar and her daughter. This changed the aspect of things; and from that time Shah Jahan became an eyesore to the

Empress. On his part, Shah Jahan suspected the designs of Nur Jahan; and hence it was he refused to lead the expedition against Qandahar, as that would take him far away from Delhi and, in view of the failing health of Jahangir, his chances of succeeding to the throne might be imperilled. Not only did he refuse to go to Qandahar, but he also raised the standard of rebellion against his father. The Nur Jahan junto had already begun to break up. Her father was no more; and her brother, the able Asaf Khan, was in secret sympathy with the ambition of his own son-in-law, Shah Jahan, and hostile to the pretensions of Shahryar. But he bided his time and continued to be outwardly loyal to the Empress.

Shah Jahan had a number of followers; helped by them he advanced towards Delhi, but was defeated at Balochpur to the south of it. He was driven through Malwa into the Deccan and thence across Telingana into Bengal and Biha

\* For evidence regarding Khusrav's death, see B. P. Sakseena-  
*Shah Jahan of Delhi* (1932), p. 35 describing the sources.

where he secured the strong fortress of Rhotas and even planned an attack on Allahabad. In the latter provinces Shah Jahan maintained himself for a time, but was driven again into the Deccan by the relentless pursuit of Mahabat Khan, who, along with Prince Parwiz, was in charge of the imperial forces. In the Deccan country Shah Jahan consolidated his position by becoming friendly with his former foe, Malik Ambar. It was at this stage that Nur Jahan, for reasons to be explained presently, offered pardon and peace to Shah Jahan on condition that he surrendered the forts of Rhotas and Asir and also agreed to send two of his sons, Dara and Aurangzib, as hostages to the court. Shah Jahan accepted the peace offer—indeed he was thankful for it—on Nur Jahan's own conditions; he himself remained in the Deccan. “Thus ended a civil war which had lasted over three years, cost millions of money and thrown the whole empire into confusion, led to the death of some of its greatest men, and deeply injured the imperial interest in Afghanistan, on the north-western frontier, as well as in the Deccan.”\*

The main cause for the abrupt termination of the civil war was Nur Jahan's hatred of Mahabat Khan who was growing more and more powerful every day and who, in 1625, entered into an alliance with Parwiz. Nur Jahan was shrewd enough to perceive that this nobleman would thwart her design of making Shahryar emperor after Jahangir. She therefore recalled Mahabat Khan to court. The latter clearly saw in this order a well-hatched plan to ruin him. He did obey the imperial call, but came with five thousand Rajputs devoted to him. The Emperor was then encamped on the bank of the Jhelum on his way to Kabul. Quite suddenly Mahabat Khan surrounded the Emperor's camp, while the imperial guards were well away on the other side of the river. From this time for nearly one hundred days the Emperor was a prisoner in his hands. Nur Jahan effected her escape and struggled hard to recover the person of

\* Beni Prasad: *History of Jahangir*, p. 395.

her husband. The scope of this little book prohibits us from narrating the full story of Nur Jahan's ingenious and brave attempt to defeat the designs of Mahabat Khan. It can only be recorded here that by cunning and stratagem she was able to liberate the Emperor and beat Mahabat Khan on his own ground. Disappointed in his plans, the latter fled to the camp of Shah Jahan, especially as Prince Parwiz was dead—poisoned, it was suspected, by Shah Jahan.

A few months after his release from the grip of Mahabat Khan, the Emperor Jahangir died on October 28, 1627, at Chingiz Hatli near Bhimbhar in the Punjab.\* He was buried in a magnificent mausoleum erected by Nur Jahan in Lahore.

Historians have differed in their estimate of the character and attainments of Jahangir. Those who have implicitly believed the testimony of Hawkins and Roe, consider him as a drunken sovereign, bad, weak and cruel. It is not the entire truth. He himself candidly admits in his *Memoirs*† that he was fond of the cup; and on occasions he perpetrated horrible crimes. 'But, as a rule, he was remarkable for humanity, affability and an opened mind.' It is not easy to find out his religious views. He was no an orthodox Muslim, nor did he like popular Hinduism. 'Christ's parentage, poverty, and crucifixion were incomprehensible to him. Sufism and Vedantism produced a great impression on his mind. He loved to contemplate on the one true God and desired much the company of saints

\* Just beyond the frontier of the modern Gujarat district of the Punjab.

† This book is a valuable supplement to the *Akbar Nama* and gives a lively picture of the times. The *Memoirs* of Babar and Jahangir are far more human and fuller of matter than even the *Gallic Wars* of Julius Caesar. His account of himself, as given in the *Memoirs*, "has its own charm, for it reveals the real man." The *Memoirs* were written by the emperor himself right down to the seventeenth year of his reign; and then they were continued for a short time by a court historian who continued the narrative, right down to the Emperor's death in his own work.—See Rogers and *Remondet's terms* (in 2 Vols.)—preface.

and ascetics. Jahangir's greatest weakness was his dependence on those who loved and flattered him. "Jahangir's reign, on the whole," writes a well-informed scholar, "was fruitful of peace and prosperity to the empire. Under its auspices industry and commerce progressed; architecture achieved notable triumphs; painting reached its high-water-mark; \* \* \* A host of remarkable Persian and vernacular poets all over the country combined to make the period the Augustan age of mediæval Indian literature."

In the time of Jahangir, two Englishmen, Captain Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe, visited the Emperor bearing letters from James I of England. The former landed at Surat in August 1608 and encountered much opposition from the Portuguese who were jealous of British interference in the Indian waters. Hawkins managed to reach the imperial court and all his demands were granted. But owing to the intrigues of the Portuguese who at that time policed the Indian coast and protected the pilgrim vessels going to Mecca, much of the trade concessions granted was withdrawn. Seven years later, Sir Thomas Roe reached the Mughal court as the accredited ambassador from James I of England. He was accompanied by an English clergyman, Edward Terry. Roe succeeded in getting considerable trade privileges for his nation. Roe's observations are very detailed and full about the events of the time at the Mughal court, like the war in the Deccan, the troubles regarding the succession, and the rise of Shah Jahan to power. He gives vivid portraits of the Emperor, his sons, Asaf Khan and, above all, of Shah Jahan, who "bold and haughty, moves through Roe's pages with a magnificence that suits well the future master builder of Agra and Delhi." We are indebted to these two gentlemen for the valuable records left by them about life in the Mughal court.\*

\* See *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, edited by W. Foster (1926); C. L. Owen *Travels in India* (1903), Chap. VIII; and W. Foster's *Early Travels in India* (1921) which gives an account of Hawkins and other English travellers in India in the reign.

SECTION II. THE REIGN OF SHAH JAHAN (1628-1656)

When Jahangir died in October 1627, his son Shah Jahan was in the Deccan, while Shahryar was at Agra. The latter at once went to Lahore to meet his mother-in-law, Nur Jahan, who he fondly hoped, would contrive his accession to the throne. But he reckoned without his host. The interests of Shah Jahan, the ablest of Jahangir's sons, were safe in the hands of Asaf Khan who set up on the throne a dummy, Dawar Bakhsh, a son of the strangled Khusrau, pending Shah Jahan's arrival. The latter hastened with all speed to Agra and, by a lavish distribution of gold, won the favour of the army and the nobility. The stop-gap Dawar Bakhsh, nick-named Bulaki, was brushed aside and Shahryar was blinded. Shah Jahan thus ascended the throne (February 1628).

Shah Jahan  
obtains the  
throne

The first events of Shah Jahan's reign were the suppression of a rebellion of the Bundela Rajputs, *i.e.*, Rajputs settled in Bundelkhand, and another one of Khan Jahan Lodi. The latter proved to be more formidable than the former. The Lodi was an Afghan and consequently bitterly hostile to the Mughal ascendancy in India. He allied himself with the Sultan of Ahmadnagar and for more than three years defied the Mughal Emperor. He was pursued across Bundelkhand and Gondwana, and after a severe struggle in the Deccan, defeated and killed. His failure and death hastened the downfall of the declining kingdom of Ahmadnagar. There was another rebellion led by Jujhar Singh of Bundelkhand which had also to be put down with some trouble. ~~The principal forts of Bundelkhand were occupied and the magnificent temple of Orchha was destroyed; while the Bundelas became hostile at heart to the Mughals.~~

Rebellions  
suppressed

Chronologically, the next event in the reign of Shah Jahan was the death of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, the daughter of Asaf Khan. She died of the pain of child-birth (7th June, 1631). She was exceedingly devoted

Mumtaz  
Mahal

to her husband and bore fourteen children to him. Her death profoundly affected the Emperor who "would have turned *faqir* for the rest of his life, if kingship were not a sacred charge which no one can lay aside at his pleasure."\* She was at first buried at Burhanpur; and later on the body was removed to Agra. Over the remains of his queen, the bereaved husband built the exquisite mausoleum—the Taj Mahal, one of the noblest and costliest buildings in the world.†

The death of Mumtaz Mahal was followed by a bitter persecution of the Portuguese (1631) who abused the trading privileges already given to them.

The Portuguese  
of Bengal  
punished

Not only did they maintain their own customs-house at Hughli and levy duties on tobacco the use of which was widely prevalent in India then, but they carried on an obnoxious kind of slave trade. They kidnapped Hindu and Muhammadan children and forcibly converted them to the Christian faith. The arrogant Portuguese had eventually to face the wrath of Shah Jahan who ordered the destruction of their settlement. The little band of adventurers resisted the imperial forces in Bengal for a time; but in the end they gave up the struggle and suffered very badly (1632). Hughli was destroyed and the Portuguese prisoners were inhumanly treated. These have been attributed to the religious intolerance of the Emperor who was provoked into this attitude by the piratical deeds, the proselytising zeal and other acts of the Portuguese. The extinc-

\* J. Sarkar: *Studies in Mughal India* (1919), p. 27.

† The Taj was begun in 1632 and was completed in 1643. The cost of the structure was more than fifty lakhs of rupees. Twenty kinds of different precious stones were set in the Taj. Shah Jahan not only built the Taj, but bestowed in *wagf* thirty villages of the parganahs of Agra and Nagarchin, yielding a revenue of one lakh of rupees, and the serais, and shops adjoining the tomb, producing another lakh of rupees in rent, for the upkeep of the mausoleum and the support of the pious men placed in it. [See *Studies in Mughal India*, by J. Sarkar, p. 22] The Taj has been praised and described a thousand times. According to one description it was "a dream in marble, designed by Titans and finished by jewellers." See Havell's *Indian Architecture*, Ch. II; and V. A. Smith: *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (pp. 183 et seq.).

tion of the Portuguese power in Bengal coincided with the beginning of an attitude of religious bigotry and intolerance on the part of the Emperor.

Shah Jahan next turned his attention towards the Deccan. It had always been the policy of his predecessors on the throne to annex the whole country. Affairs in the Deccan Akbar attempted his best ; but he could not accomplish anything more than the annexation of a few tracts belonging to Ahmadnagar. Malik Ambar had, in the reign of Jahangir, almost re-established the power of the Nizam Shahis. It was against this Abyssinian that Shah Jahan, when he was a prince, was despatched and obtained some success. During the troubled years at the end of Jahangir's reign the ruler of Ahmadnagar succeeded in inducing Khan Jahan, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, to cede to him Balaghat and other possessions. Now he openly defied the imperial power by siding with the rebel, Khan Jahan. As soon as he ascended the throne, Shah Jahan resolved to annex the whole of the Deccan. Fortunately for the Emperor, a son of Malik Ambar, Fath Khan, a corrupt and treacherous noble, became the leader in Ahmadnagar. He was bribed by the imperial officials into putting to death the king. The Mughals bribed many of the Maratha chiefs in the service of Ahmadnagar to desert their master. By 1632 the extinction of the kingdom was complete, though Bijapur was ready to help in its revival, and Fath Khan's loyalty was still doubtful ; while a brave Maratha chief, Shahji, still continued to hold out in Junner and the neighbouring districts in the name of the fallen dynasty which he strove to revive.

Bijapur and Golconda continued to be independent during the days of Akbar and Jahangir. The Sultan of Bijapur was now the powerful Muhammad Adil Shah. He engaged large bands of Marathas in his army and proved to be a scourge to the neighbouring regions. Now Shah Jahan demanded the submission of both these states. Golconda readily submitted ; but not so Bijapur. Shah Jahan waged a ruthless war against it and forced a treaty on the



Adil Shah (1636). Mahabat Khan, the imperial general, waged a ruthless campaign; and Shah Jahan himself proceeded to the Deccan for a second time. The Sultan promised obedience to the Mughal sovereign and also undertook not to engage the services of Maratha soldiers in future. Thus was the whole of the Deccan subdued by the Mughals. The annexed tracts were divided into four provinces, Khandesh, Berar, Telingana and Daulatabad; and Shah Jahan's third son, Aurangzib, was appointed viceroy over them all. Bijapur recognised Mughal sovereignty and agreed to submit to the Emperor's arbitration in all its disputes with the friendly Golconda. Aurangzib followed an aggressive policy of expansion towards these states.

It was the ambition of Shah Jahan to recover the hilly territories of Badakshan and Balkh to the north of Kabul and thereby pave the way for the acquisition of Samarkand itself. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion in these tracts, Shah Jahan despatched a huge force under Prince Murad and Ali Mardan Khan, a Persian general, who had fled to the Mughal court after betraying Qandahar. Balkh and Badakshan were soon overrun. The Mughals had to guard their communications with the rear over the long and arduous passes of the Hindu Kush and to keep back the Uzbek tribesmen advancing from the north, as well as the plundering raids of the Tartars. In 1647 Aurangzib was appointed to the command of the two provinces. He however found his position insecure and wisely retreated to Kabul after a dangerous and protracted fight with the Uzbeks. "Shah Jahan's precious scheme of aggrandizement had cost the exchequer more than four crores of rupees."

Aurangzib was next employed against Qandahar which had an interesting history of its own. In the middle ages Qandahar it was a great international mart. Its strategic position was of equal importance. The city of Kabul was within striking distance from it. It forms one of the two gates of India, one of the two

natural bases of operations for a Persian or Central Asian army against India.\* This double value of Qandahar was recognised by Babar who firmly held it. On his death in 1530, it passed on to his son Prince Kamran. When Humayun took refuge with the Shah of Persia, the latter promised to help him in the recovery of Hindustan, provided

Qandahar was given to him. Humayun took it, but did not hand it over to the Shah. In 1558 the Persians once again became masters of the city. Akbar was not slow to realise its importance and in his time it remained in the hands of the Mughals. The unfortunate Jahangir lost the Qandahar fort as we have seen. The powerful Shah Abbas the Great of Persia regained its possession. When Shah Jahan became Emperor, Qandahar was in charge of Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian general already referred to. He was displeased with his government and in 1638 handed over the fort to one of the officers of Shah Jahan and himself entered the service of the Mughal Emperor. Shah Jahan regarded this as "an event of crowning glory," especially as it followed the successful Deccan operations. In 1648 the Persians naturally enough attempted to retake Qandahar. It was against this enterprise that Aurangzib was despatched. The prince, however, arrived too late to save the city which fell into the hands of the Persians (February 1649). A second expedition against Qandahar under Aurangzib met with no better fate (1652). Prince Dara, the Emperor's favourite son, boasted, in the meantime, that he would be able to take the fort. A third time, a big force was sent under Dara; and "he too had to raise the siege (1653.)" The shame of the loss of Qandahar was only worsened by the failure of all the three expeditions sent to retake it under the Emperor's sons.†

These campaigns cost the treasury, according to Dr. Smith, more than twelve crores of rupees. But they

\* In an age when Kabul was a part of the Delhi Empire, Qandahar was our indispensable first line of defence. J. N. Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. I, p. 129.—See p. 235 above.

† For the sieges of Qandahar see Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. I, Chap. VII & VIII; and B. P. Saksena: *History of Shah Jahan of Delhi*, Chap. VIII & IX.

were not without their lessons. They demonstrated the utter impossibility of holding the mountain provinces from a distant base such as Delhi. The soldiers on these occasions were able to witness the coolness and conspicuous personal bravery displayed by Aurangzib whom they had no difficulty in recognising as their future master.

After the Qandahar enterprise, Aurangzib was appointed viceroy of the Deccan a second time. His viceroyalty was distinguished by the revenue reforms he carried out. In this he had the good fortune to be assisted by an able fiscal officer, Murshid Kuli Khan, who applied Todar Mall's system of survey and assessment to the Deccan. The careful and efficient revenue administration of the prince was prompted mainly by the necessity to get increased revenues to meet the costly civil and military administration entrusted to him. It was now that Aurangzib began to display his religious intolerance and dislike of Rajputs. He built a new city after his name Aurangabad, which grew rapidly as the capital of the Mughal Deccan. He had also several misunderstandings with his father; and this was one of the reasons why there was so much of bitterness displayed by him in the war of succession.

At the same time, Aurangzib cherished and carried out the aggressive design of putting an end to the semi-independent principalities of Bijapur and Golconda. Excuses in plenty existed for war against these two states. Helped ably by a Persian adventurer Mir Jumla, who had risen to be the *wazir* of Golconda and had conquered extensive territories in the Carnatic coast, Aurangzib laid siege to Golconda in 1656. But for the interference of Shah Jahan, that state would have been wiped out of existence. As it was, peace was made in the end, the Sultan agreeing to pay a heavy fine and cede also a district. Aurangzib also led an expedition against the flourishing Gond kingdom of Deogarh and extorted its submission (1655).

Bijapur was next attacked. Bidar and Kalyani fell in 1657 and the whole territory was pillaged. Mir Jumla who had been well received and honoured at Delhi, had joined Aurangzib with reinforcements, and the fall of Bidar and Kalyani made the way open for an advance on Bijapur itself. But suddenly, Shah Jahan, whose mind had been changed by the persuasions of the Bijapur agents and by the jealousy entertained by Prince Dara against his younger brother, ordered an immediate peace with Bijapur and thus the war abruptly ended without ensuring any conquest for Aurangzib.

In September 1657, Shah Jahan took suddenly ill. That was a signal for a fratricidal war among the four sons of the Emperor. Dara, the eldest, was the favourite of Shah Jahan. On him every kind of honour had been showered by a sovereign who felt that his days of earthly existence were numbered. He was the viceroy of the Punjab and the north-western provinces, but continued to govern them with the help of agents, while he spent his time with his father, nursing him tenderly during the days of his illness. Dara was able and clever, but violent in temper, arrogant in manners, and above all, self-willed. In religion he was not a strict Muslim; rather, he was a mystic who loved the Upanishads, "which he declared to be a revelation earlier than the Koran." Shuja was the second son of Shah Jahan. He had the viceroyalty of Bengal assigned to him. Sluggish and inert, Shuja was incapable of quick action. Though a decent soldier, he did not possess skill enough to profit by victory. He was a Shiah by profession. The third son was Aurangzib; calm and cool-headed, crafty and cunning, he easily towered over all his brothers in point of ability. He had an iron will and was a perfect master in the art of simulation. He was, as has been noted already, the viceroy of the Deccan. In religion he was an orthodox Sunni Muslim. The last and fourth son of Shah Jahan was Murad whose character Dr. Smith ably summarises in a single sentence. He "was a passionate, head-strong, tyrannical man, the bravest of

the brave, but drunken, dissolute and brainless." He was of the Shiah persuasion and ruled Gujarat. Such were the sons of Shah Jahan who were preparing to fly at one another's throats on the mere news of their father's serious illness.\*

The many interesting details concerning this war of succession are narrated graphically in the pages of Sarkar. All that can be attempted here is a bare summary of the struggle which ended in Aurangzib getting the throne. Shuja and Murad crowned themselves as Emperors of Hindustan on the receipt of the news of their father's illness, in the capitals of their respective provinces. Dara was with his father and considered his succession so certain that

The war of  
succession  
(1657-58)

he already signed imperial decrees on behalf of the Emperor. Aurangzib was watching the situation and hatched a plan to outwit his brothers. He first entered into a solemn treaty with the thoughtless Murad, promising to divide the empire between themselves. He also gave out that his real object was to prevent an infidel † like Dara from getting the empire and that, after placing Murad on the throne, he would retire from court. The unsuspecting Murad believed him and united his forces with his. The joint army met the imperial forces commanded by a son of Dara, at Dharmat, not far from Ujjain. Faulty generalship and mutual jealousies among Dara's adherents decided the battle in favour of the allied brothers (April, 1658). A Battle of Samu- garh second and more decisive engagement took place in May 1658 at Samugarh, eight miles from Agra. Dara himself commanded the army

\* "Dara and Aurangzib represent the two sides of Shah Jahan's character as well as the two phases of his glorious reign. Dara is the central figure of a great religious and literary movement for the adaptation of Islam to the spiritual traditions of India...He attempted to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam not for the commonalty of the two creeds, but only for the elect of the two communities...He proved a failure in war and state-craft because he made them the secondary objects of his pursuit. Aurangzib was a militant pan-Islamist to whom the only solution of the creeds appeared to be the conversion of the whole world to Islam. Dara and Aurangzib personify respectively the spirit of progress and of reaction." K. R. Qanungo: *Dara Shukoh*, Vol. I, *Biography* (1935); pp. X and XI of Introduction and Ch. XV.

† To the Sunni, a Shiah was an infidel and a Sufi like Dara was more so.

which was 50,000 strong. The Rajput hosts of Dara fought heroically; but the prince's tactics were bad from the beginning. Aurangzib, on the other hand, played a defensive game and his victory was complete.\* This battle is one of the most decisive in Indian History, "from the political, moral and military point of view." It saw the definite close of one age, the age of Akbar, when nationalism in politics and culture was fostered and ushered in the period of government on the basis of the ideas of Islamic intolerance and racial political exclusiveness.

The victory at Samugarh was promptly followed by an attack by Aurangzib on the Agra fort, from which Dara

**Aurangzib's triumph**

escaped, taking with him his family. The aged Emperor was stunned by this new blow. Gathering his wits, he attempted

to parley with the victor, to whom, in token of friendship and filial love, he sent a famous sword, *Alamgir* "Conqueror of the Universe";† but the crafty son could not be cheated. The latter's artillery proved ineffective; but he had recourse to a more effective weapon that opened the

**Shah Jahan a prisoner**

gates of Agra. He cut off the water supply to the fort and its garrison. Shah Jahan, realising the danger and himself

dying of thirst, opened the gates. Aurangzib made him a prisoner and the old Emperor was consigned to the harem with a strict guard to watch over him.

Prince Murad soon found out that Aurangzib had no intention of fulfilling the solemn treaty he had entered into with him. His flattering courtiers fanned the flame of

**Murad duped and imprisoned**

jealousy and ambition. He was therefore led to increase the strength of his army in opposition to Aurangzib; but

the wily Alamgir was not to be outwitted. He invited Murad to dinner in his tent, plied him with more wine than was good for his health, and in the end, while Murad was

\* See for details, Sarkar's *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. II, Chap. XVI; Qanungo's *Dara Shukoh*, Vol. I, Chh. IX and X; also Bernier's *Travels in the Mogul Empire* (A.D. 1656-1668), trans. by A. Constable and edited by Smith (1916). Bernier was a contemporary witness of the war of succession and wrote a critical account of the Mughal government.

† *Ibid.* p. 73.

dozing, imprisoned him. He was despatched, first to Salimgarh prison and later on to Gwalior. From the latter place he attempted to escape but was caught again.\* Aurangzib was now "determined to remove all anxiety on the score of Murad for ever." He therefore had him executed with all forms of Quranic law (December 1661).

After his formal enthronement, Aurangzib went in pursuit of Dara who was hunted down from place to place, from Delhi to Lahore and thence to Pursuit of Dara Multan. Leaving him there, Aurangzib turned against his other brother, Shuja, who had recovered from a previous defeat by Sulaiman Shikoh, son of Dara. Shuja was worsted at Khajwah, January 1659, and was pursued till he reached the Arakan frontier, where it is generally supposed he was put to death by the Arakanese.

The sad career of Dara remains now to be traced. He was, as before, hunted down from place to place. Worst of all, Dara had dismissed from his service, Dara executed Dand Khan, the one man who had served him faithfully and who subsequently joined Aurangzib. From Multan, Dara went to Thatta and thence to Cutch. At Ahmadabad he met a friendly noble, Shah Nawaz Khan, who allowed him to occupy Surat. Instead of proceeding to the Deccan where he might have received considerable military help, he fell in with the plan of Jaswant Singh, a traitor who betrayed him. Flying across the Rajputana deserts, he hoped to flee to Qandahar and from thence to Persia. But he grew desperate and accepted the hospitality of another traitor, Jiwan Khan, chief of Dadar, near the Bolan Pass. The latter handed him over

\* Sarkar narrates the story of his attempted escape in full:—  
 "The grateful Mughals now planned a rescue; one night they contrived to fasten a rope-ladder to a battlement of the fort, kept a horse saddled ready below it, and sent word to Murad to escape. The Prince was infatuated with the beauty of his concubine Sarsali Bai whom he had taken to his prison by entreaty with Aurangzib. At midnight, when all was ready for his flight, he went to take a lover's farewell of her. There was little hope of their meeting together again. At the news, the woman set up a loud lament, crying, "To whom are you leaving me?" Hearing the noise, the guards awoke, lighted their torches and search-lights and soon discovered the ladder."—*History of Aurangzib*, Vol. II, p. 93.

to the imperial agents. The unhappy prince was brought to Delhi on 23rd August 1659.\* A few days later, Dara was executed—murdered, we should say, in an ignominious manner. The scene at the time of Dara's murder was heart-rending. His son, Siphir Shukoh, clung to his father; but he was turned away from him. The brutal slaves then flung upon the prince and finished him off.†

Shah Jahan survived his favourite son, Dara, for nearly seven years. Throughout this period he languished in prison, though carefully tended by his elder daughter. He died on January 22, 1666. Aurangzib did not care to see his dying father; nor was any arrangement made for the funeral of the emperor decent. "Aurangzib's treatment of his father," says Sarkar, "outraged not only the moral sense, but also the social decorum of the age."

On the whole, Shah Jahan's rule was good. He was kind to his family and to his subjects. He awarded deterrent punishments to offenders and hence there was peace in the land. He put down oppression and corruption among the imperial officials. He maintained a splendid court. His reign witnessed the erection of stately buildings, one of which, the Taj Mahal, has been noticed already. Shah

\* The Emperor ordered that the captive should be paraded through the capital in order to let the people see with their own eyes that it was he and none else, so that in future no counterfeit Dara might raise his head in the provinces and by winning the support of the credulous, create disturbances against the government. —SARKAR.

† This tragic event has elicited the following observations of Sarkar, for quoting which no apology is required: "Two centuries rolled by, and then the dynasty of the Great Mughal closed in a still bloodier scene. On 22nd September 1857, not far from the spot where the mangled remains of Dara Shukoh were laid in earth, Princes Mirza Mughal, Mirza Quraish Sultan, and Mirza Abu Bakht, the sons and grandson of the last Emperor of Delhi and one of them his chosen heir, were shot dead in cold blood by a foreign soldier, as devoid of principle as of pity, while they were vainly protesting their innocence and crying for an enquiry into their past conduct. The bodies of the last of the legitimate Timurids were flung like carcasses on the terrace of the police office and exposed to the public gaze, as Dara's had been. In brother's blood did Aurangzib mount the throne, and in the blood of his children's children did the royal name pass away from his race."—SARKAR: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. II, p. 220,



Jahan was fond of display and spent large sums of money on objects of but little use to the people at large. Thus he built the famous peacock throne which cost him ten millions of rupees. Very rightly Dr. V. A. Smith considers it "as a senseless exhibition of barbaric ostentation and almost devoid of artistic merit."

Shah Jahan was more orthodox in his views than his predecessors and did not tolerate any practice or institution that offended the religious susceptibilities of Islam. His court was very splendid and did a great service in developing culture among the people. He patronised poets, philosophers, scholars, artisans and painters; and his courtiers imitated him. Some of them like Ali Mardan Khan, Mir Jumla and Raja Jai Singh were as distinguished in letters as in war and state-craft. There were numerous schools for higher education spread over the country; and Persian, being the court language, received considerable encouragement. Several good historians like Abdul Hamid Lahori wrote accounts of the reign. Some Hindus attained reputation as men of letters in Persian. Dara Shukoh patronised the translation of works from Sanskrit into Persian. Astronomy, mathematics and medicine flourished; while the reign witnessed the most brilliant epoch in the development of Hindi language and literature. As is well-known, the architectural achievement of the reign was something wonderful; and the style that was developed was the result of the impact of Persian culture on the Indian.

The Emperor had a deep concern for the welfare of the people; and this was what led the French traveller,

**Shah Jahan's administration** Tavernier, to think that "Shah Jahan ruled over his people, rather as a father over his family than as a king over his subjects." The administrative machinery, both at the capital and in the provinces, continued to be the same as in the reign of Akbar; and the character of the administration continued to be essentially military and arbitrary. The reign on the whole represents a paradox. "On the one

hand there is a remarkable display of grandeur and greatness; on the other signs of decay are too visible." For much of the information about the events of this period we are indebted to two European travellers who visited India in the seventeenth century, viz., Bernier and Tavernier, the French jeweller. The former was a French doctor by profession and in the service of the Great Mughal for some time. He wrote an account of his *Travels* giving a vivid description of the Mughal court and government.\*

\* See Smith and Constable's translation of Bernier's *Travels* and Crooke's edition of the *Travels* of J. B. Tavernier (2 Vols.), trans. by V. Ball (1925). Bernier's evidence is valuable regarding the Mughal administration and its defects. Tavernier gives a good picture of the trade of the country.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE REIGN OF AURANGZIB (1658-1707)

#### SECTION I. THE FIRST HALF OF THE REIGN (1658-1632)

We shall now follow the political fortunes of Aurangzib as Emperor. He occupied Delhi in May 1659 and was crowned Emperor a second time. He signalled his accession to the throne by the remission of taxes and the abolition of many local cesses. He took for his title 'Alamgir,' the name of the sword presented to him by Shah Jahan. He was a stern Puritan, and in his state activities he confined himself to the law of the Quran. He therefore came in conflict with the Hindus, the Afghans and the Persians, all of whom he hated alike.

The first notable event in his reign was Mir Jumla's war with Assam (1661-63). We have already referred to this adventurer. He was the able and intelligent lieutenant of Aurangzib in his Deccan wars undertaken in the time of Shah Jahan. He also helped his royal master in hunting down Shuja. When Aurangzib came to the throne, he prudently sent this able soldier far away from the capital, as viceroy of Bengal. Mir Jumla now undertook to punish the Ahoms of Assam who had raided Mughal territory.\* Mir Jumla succeeded in reaching the Ahom capital and punishing the tribes. But the rainy season was approaching and he could not stay in the hills. The Mughal posts were also isolated by rain and flood. Mir Jumla wisely retired from Assam after receiving the nominal submission of the Ahoms. Very soon he died of fever brought about by exhaustion. Of Mir Jumla's character as a soldier, thus writes Prof. Sarkar, rather a

\*The Ahoms, according to Sarkar, were a branch of the Shan race whose home was the hilly region lying north and east of Upper Burma. Ferocious in manners and brutal in temperament, the Ahoms possessed great strength. Their soldiers were remarkably efficient. See Sarkar for details, Vol. III, pp. 170, ff.; and *A History of the Mughal North-East Frontier Policy*. By B. N. Bhattacharyya (1929).

rather tribute for one born in that age of reckless war and murder in battle-field. "No other general of that age conducted war with so much humanity and justice, nor kept his soldiers, privates and captains alike, under such discipline. \* \* The owner of twenty maunds of diamonds, viceroy of the rich province of Bengal, he shared, with the meanest soldier, the privations of the march and brought premature death on himself by scorning delights and living laborious days. \* \* \* He issued strict orders forbidding plunder, rape and oppression of the people and saw to it that the orders were obeyed."\* After the death of Mir Jumla, Shayista Khan, the Emperor's maternal uncle, was appointed to succeed him as viceroy of Bengal.

Soon after consolidating his rule in the north, Aurangzib turned his attention towards the Deccan, the viceroyalty of which he had held twice. Great Deccan politics changes were taking place there. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion during the last years of Shah Jahan's rule, the rising Marathas had inflicted blow upon blow on the Sultanates and were threatening the military position of the Mughals themselves. A detailed account of this remarkable people will be given in the next chapter. In this section we shall study how Aurangzib dealt with them. From his accession down to 1682 when he returned to the south to wage interminable wars with the Marathas and the Deccan Sultans (1682), an almost continual state of warfare existed between the Mughals and the Marathas. But the Mughal generals generally acted in a half-hearted manner and some of them maintained a secret understanding with Sivaji. On the other hand, Sivaji frequently invaded the Mughal territories and pretended submission on two or three occasions, "with a view to outwitting the Mughal viceroy and lulling him into inactivity or friendliness." Moreover, the Mughal generals were not supplied with adequate reinforcements of men and money

\* Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 206. [Talish who wrote a history of the invasion of Assam by Mir Jumla, eulogises his peculiar excellence and discipline, honesty and humanity.]

by the parsimonious Emperor and often acted at cross-purposes among themselves.\*

The Marathas during the time of Aurangzib were welded into a powerful organized nation by a great leader one of India's many not-to-be-forgotten heroes—Sivaji. He had plundered and pillaged the Bijapur lands with impunity. And when Aurangzib was away from the Deccan fighting for the throne, Sivaji let loose his followers on Bijapur; and its impotent government, then in the hands of a young boy, could not check him. In 1659 the Bijapur Sultan, with all the resolution born of despair, sent a large force under Afzal Khan to punish the "audacious rebel." The manner by which Sivaji overcame the Afghan general has often been narrated. Briefly then, when Sivaji understood that he could not face a huge army, he promised submission to Afzal Khan and solicited an interview with the general that he might confess his guilt and prove his loyalty to the Sultan. The deluded Afghan consented to this and came unarmed and attended by two servants. Sivaji in a similar manner came alone, followed by two of his attendants. In accordance with the custom of the age, Afzal Khan embraced Sivaji; while in this act, he received in his abdomen an agonising thrust. It was the "tiger's claws" which Sivaji had carried with him and kept carefully concealed during the interview. Afzal and his attendants were killed in the *melee* with great ease. The Bijapur forces stationed at a distance were scattered in different directions by the Maratha horsemen who, at a given signal, appeared from every neighbouring crag and bush and fell remorselessly on them. The booty was great; and the whole Deccan recognised that they had to deal with a foe quite different from the Mughals.

This traditional view, based on Khafi Khan's account, had been adopted by Grant Duff. It has, now, been dis-

\*"The Hindu officers in the Mughal pay secretly fraternised with the Deccani champion of Hinduism—"the defender of cows and Brahmans, of *tilak* and *tiki*," as his laureate, Bhushan called Sivaji—Sarkar's *Aurangzib*," Vol. IV, p. 11.

proved. The account given in the Sabhasad Bakhar and confirmed by English and Dutch evidence is that Afzul planned to capture Sivaji by treachery, and Sivaji came to know of this. He came well prepared, and when Afzul in the act of embracing struck at the side of the Maratha, Sivaji killed him. Contemporary opinion did not regard that Sivaji had done an outrageous deed.

Emboldened by his successes and marauding enterprises, Sivaji began to attack the adjoining Mughal territories also. To oppose him Aurangzib sent Shayista Khan with the definite instruction to take back from the Marathas all the lands which they had taken from Bijapur—a task for which the Mughal general was least fitted. Instead of openly attacking Sivaji, he took to the less risky course of insulting him in letters. One such letter contained a Persian stanza in which Sivaji was compared to a monkey 'whose safety lay in his mountain's forests.' In reply, Sivaji sent a Sanskrit couplet. "Therein he asserted that he was not only a monkey, but Hanuman himself—the prince of monkeys; and he vowed that he would destroy Shayista Khan just as the monkeys had helped King Rama to destroy the demon Ravana."\* After this wordy warfare, the Mughal general retired to Poona for the winter. At Poona he occupied the very house where Sivaji was born.

Sivaji was now resolved to punish and humble Shayista Khan. He therefore made every preparation to surprise him in his own quarters in Poona. In April 1663, Sivaji and 200 picked men disguised themselves as soldiers in the imperial service and thus entered the town. In the city his "emissaries had gained a Maratha foot-soldier in the Khan's service, who, on pretence of celebrating a marriage, obtained permission to go through the town with the noisy instruments used on such occasions and also for some of his companions, who always carry their arms, to join in the

\* See Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, p. 197.

procession.”\* The Maratha hero and his men mingled, unobserved, in the procession. When the noisy crowd reached the residence of the Khan, the mischief-makers surrounded the house; and a few of them scaled the walls and entered the apartment where the general was sleeping. A *melee* ensued, in the course of which Shayista Khan's son was killed. The Khan himself managed to escape with the loss of a few fingers. A Mughal nobleman of the same age and appearance as Shayista Khan having been killed before the latter's escape, Shivaji thought he had killed the Khan himself and hastened with all speed outside the city, where, gathering his troops, he marched off to the Katraj Ghat. To complete the humiliation of the Mughals,

Mughals  
outwitted which, many believed, was due to the connivance of Raja Jaswant Singh, the joint Mughal general, with Sivaji, the latter played another trick which is worth recording here as it illustrates in a typical manner the ways of the Maratha soldiery. “To the trees that grew along the top of the Katraj hill the Marathas fastened blazing torches, so that the Mughals might believe that a large army was encamped upon its summit. Sivaji then led his men due west and went back as swiftly as he could to Sinhgad. The Mughals had, by this time, heard of the raid and seeing the lights on the Katraj pass marched there with all expedition.”† With barren valour they stormed the empty summit! A further attempt to take the fort of Sinhgad ended in disaster. The Mughal general once again withdrew to Poona, his baggage train pillaged by the Maratha cavalry. Shayista Khan implored his royal master to recall him. He was subsequently appointed viceroy of Bengal, far away from the Marathas.

Aurangzib was frankly puzzled at the activities of Sivaji, though he failed miserably to appreciate the growing importance of the Maratha race. He now despatched his own son, Prince Muazzam, and Raja Jai Singh to the

\* Grant Duff: *History of the Mahrattas* (4th ed.), Vol. I, p. 165. See Sarkar: *Sivaji* (1919), pp. 98-101; and Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, pp. 160, 163.

† Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, p. 199.

command of the Deccan. The latter was a soldier of great energy; and according to Grant Prince Muazzam and Raja Jai Singh Duff\* the strength of his army and the unexpected vigour of his attack combined to create alarm in Sivaji who resolved to make peace with Aurangzib and even courted imperial service.† Prevalled upon by Raja Jai Singh, Sivaji opened negotiations; and a draft treaty was signed. The chief arrangements effected in this treaty of Purandhar (June 1665) were that Sivaji was to surrender a number of forts which he had captured, that he should help the Mughals against Bijapur and in return he should be permitted to collect *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi*, being one-fourth and one-tenth of the revenue respectively, of certain districts above the Ghats. Aurangzib in a letter to Sivaji confirmed the substance of the treaty.‡

True to the terms of the treaty, Sivaji soon joined the Mughal forces commanded by Raja Jai Singh and Dilir Khan now reducing the Bijapur strongholds. Sivaji invited to court and imprisoned While in this service, Sivaji reduced the fortresses of Phaltan and Tathwada. While investing Panhala, Sivaji was invited by Aurangzib to go to court. Advised by all, including his family deity, Bhavani, he accepted the invitation and proceeded to Agra where the Emperor was holding his court. From the beginning Aurangzib slighted him and insulted him further by assigning to him a place usually given to a *mansabdar* of 5,000. Sivaji protested and expressed his resentment to Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh, who had taken him to Agra

\* See the *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, p. 173.

† According to tradition this unexpected change of front on the part of Sivaji was no less due to a communication from the goddess Bhavani who in a dream warned the hero that he could not prevail against Jai Singh.

‡ The following remarks of Grant Duff may be read in this connection:—"Aurangzib's letter does not specify *chauth* and *sardeshmukhee*—indeed it is probable he did not comprehend their meaning or insidious tendency, but as he also had sinister views, in his plan of undermining the government of Bijapur, he agreed to Sivaji's proposal....." For the origin of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*, see Lecture 3 of Sardesai's *The Main Currents of Maratha History* (1926).



and between whom and himself an intimate friendship had sprung up. Eventually Sivaji and his son, Sambhaji, were kept in confinement near the Taj Mahal. The story of Sivaji's escape from the close custody of imperial guards is too fascinating to be omitted here.

Aurangzib had provided the prison-palace of Sivaji with every comfort the Maratha hero might require.

His escape Friends could come and go. Basketfuls of sweets and fruits were permitted from outside. The astute Sivaji now planned an escape from the prison. One day Sivaji and his son got each into a sweetmeat basket and were rushed outside, the unsuspecting guards, to whom it was a familiar sight, permitting them. Next morning, however, seeing there was a strange stillness in the building, the officers went to Sivaji's room and there found a figure covered with muslin with a hand dangling on the cot. On a closer observation they found Sivaji's signet ring on it. Believing that individual to be Sivaji, they went away. The escape, however, was discovered some time after. In the meantime the Maratha birds had flown far beyond the reach of the Mughal forces. Ultimately Sivaji and Sambhaji reached Poona after encountering many difficulties on the way. During his absence at the Mughal court, which lasted nine months, there was no confusion or rebellion among his followers. His reputation was greatly enhanced by this incident.\*

Further activities of Sivaji After his escape from the Mughal custody, Sivaji re-occupied all his old forts of vantage from which he harassed the Mughal forces. Against him, the Emperor, now growing more and more suspicious of his generals, sent Prince Muazzam and Raja Jaswant Singh. They were bribed by Sivaji. They therefore interceded on his behalf and even obtained from the Mughal Emperor a recognition of Sivaji's title as Raja. Sivaji's career of plunder and conquest went on unchecked. He raided Khandesh, brought most of the southern Konkan under his sway and carried his depredations as far north as

\* For a picturesque narrative see B. S. Deshpande's *The Deliverance or the Escape of Shivaji the Great from Agra* (1929).

Broach. He attacked Surat on two occasions and plundered it thoroughly, except, for the strongly defended European factories. Then marching south, he reached the borders of Tanjore, his father's old *jaghir*, now held by his brother on behalf of Bijapur and brought him "to a sense of fraternal duty." Passing along by Madras in 1677, he took Gingee (Jinji), Vellore and Arni. Returning home after an absence of nineteen months, he entered into an alliance with the Sultan of Bijapur and compelled the Mughals to raise the siege of that city. Sivaji died in 1680, to the great relief of Aurangzib.

Aurangzib's inability to check the expansion of the Marathas was due largely to his pre-occupation in the north-western frontier. The Pathan tribesmen who occupied the valleys leading from India to Kashmir had been always a source of trouble to the rulers of Hindustan. They were a fierce and nomadic people with no political organization. It was not possible to enter into treaty obligations with them, for there was no common head with whom treaties could be arranged. These hill-men—called variously Afridis, Shinwaris, Yusufzais and Khataks—levied toll on the traffic between India and Kabul; and the Mughals found it cheaper to bribe the clansmen than to coerce them.

In 1667, a great movement took place among the Yusufzais. Their powerful leader, Bhagu, drew the heads of other families, united them in a common cause and with a large force crossed the Indus above Attock. They invaded Pakhli and captured most of the Mughal outposts. It was against this Afghan danger that Aurangzib wasted his energy and resources. It will be tedious to enter into details. It is sufficient to note that, though from the military point of view, the Mughal forces won successes, the main advantage continued to remain with the Yusufzais. The whole country from Qandahar to Attock across the passes was greatly disturbed. The Emperor had to give large subsidies to the Afghans to induce them to

Cause of Afghan war

remain in peace. He also followed the familiar policy of *divide et impera* that they might not unite against India. There were two severe reverses inflicted on Mughal arms by the rebel; and Aurangzib himself had to go to Peshawar in 1674, with a vast army and a large park of artillery, in order to conduct the operations in person. The political effect of this Afghan war is worthy of note and has thus been admirably summarised by Sarkar. "It made the employment of Afghans in the ensuing Rajput war impossible, though the Afghans were just the class of soldiers who could have won victory for the imperialists in that rugged and barren country. Moreover it relieved the pressure on Sivaji by draining the Deccan of the best Mughal troops for service on the north-western frontier. The Maratha chief took advantage of this diversion of his enemy's strength to sweep in a dazzling succession of triumphs through Golconda to the Karnatak and back again through Bijapur territory to Raigarh, during the eighteen months following December 1676. It was the climax of his career, but the Afridis and Khataks made its unbroken success possible."\*

Before dealing with the Rajput war mentioned in the quotation above, let us briefly examine Aurangzib's policy towards the Hindus which led to it. In strict theory the Muslim state was a theocracy; that is to say, it was the kingdom of God and the ruler was merely His agent. Aurangzib was a strict and devout Muslim; and he therefore lost no opportunity to put his theory into practice. The civil laws and institutions of his empire were therefore conceived in the same spirit. The Hindus were infidels and the Quranic Law gave no quarter for them. "If any infidel is suffered to exist in the community, it is a necessary evil, and for a transitional period only."† He had come to the throne as the champion of dominant and uncompromising Islam and believed in the necessity for a stern administration. The war of succession had thrown the country into a state of disorganisa-

\* Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, pp. 281-2.

† Sarkar: *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 285.

tion ; and the people had to be protected from the petty tyranny and exactions of the officials. Several vexatious cesses were now abolished by the Emperor. Provincial governors were asked to assist in the work of moral reform, like the prohibition of gambling and of the consumption of *bhang* and intoxicants. Mosques which had fallen into ruin were repaired ; and the study of Muslim theology was encouraged. Aurangzib's bigotry increased with his years. A renowned Sufi ascetic, Sarmad, was ordered to be put to death for his unorthodox teachings. Aurangzib then attacked the Hindus and Hinduism in a number of ways. In the very first year of his reign he gave out that his religion 'forbade him to allow the building of new temples.' In 1664 he desecrated a Hindu temple of Chintaman (in Gujarat) by killing a cow in it and then converting it into a mosque. He issued orders to his officials to pull down all temples and to prevent the construction of new ones. In 1669, again, the fiat went forth to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious teaching and practices.\* The famous temples of Mathura, the birth place of Lord Sri Krishna, and of Somanath were ruthlessly pulled down. *Jaziya*, which the kind Akbar had abolished, was revived ; and this tax on non-Muslims weighed heavily on the poor. Hindu protesters were trampled down by elephants. Sivaji's reasoned letter on the subject only met with contempt.

Jaziya re-imposed

Aurangzib was deaf, in this matter, to the pleadings of and consideration for both pity and political expediency.

Measures of Hindu persecution

The tax was so unpopular that in many places it could be only levied by force and a large army of Muslim collectors and amins had to be employed to realise it. The customs were doubled in the case of Hindu merchants and traders. Rewards and posts in the public service were offered to Hindu converts ; and ' *qanungoshi* ' on condition of turning Muslim ' became a proverbial expression.\* In 1671 an order was passed that all rent-collectors in the crown lands were to be Muslims ; and viceroys and talukdars were ordered to

\* See Appendix VI, Vol. III of Sarkar's *Aurangzib*.

dismiss their Hindu head clerks and accountants and replace them by Muslims. ✓ It was found impossible to run the administration after dismissing the Hindu officials; and half their number was left to the Hindus. (Restraints) were also put on Hindu celebrations during fairs and festivals. One result of this unpopular impost was that it scared away traders who fled to the Deccan. According to Sarkar, even provisions could not be obtained for soldiers; they begged the Emperor to remove the tax. But no! he would not damn his soul by ignoring the Quranic precept!

The policy underlying the *jaziya* was to convert the Hindus. Converts to the Muslim faith received rich rewards and high posts while these were denied to the Hindus. ✓ Conversions The revenue from the poll-tax on non-Muslims was used 'in aiding the mission propaganda' of the Muslims. ✓ In 1668 the Emperor even forbade the holding of Hindu fairs near holy places.

Thus there was grave discontent among the majority of the people who were ground down by heavy taxation. ✓ The Jat rising— The Jat peasants of the Mathura district were the first to rebel. In Gokla Hindu reaction Jat, the zamindar of Tilpat, they found a leader. A very large Mughal force was sent against the Jats and they were subdued. Again they raised the standard of rebellion in 1688 and the trouble was not over even by the end of the reign.

The religious bigotry of the Emperor was once again responsible for the magnitude which the rebellion of the Satnamis assumed in 1672. "The Satnamis," says Sarkar, "are a Hindu sect so called from their devotion to the

✓ name of the true God (*satya nam*). The cause of their rebellion was very obscure. The rebellion of the Satnamis A private dispute between a foot-soldier and one of the sect soon developed into a big struggle. In the later stages of the rising the quarrel took on a religious colour, aided no doubt by the iconoclastic zeal displayed by Aurangzib. The Satnamis looted and plundered in the neighbourhood of Delhi itself and gained large adherents. They took possession of Narnul and organized their own

government. Aurangzib suppressed the rebellion after a most bloody encounter (1672).\*

Three years after the above rebellion, the Emperor had Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, put to death. It will

be convenient, at this stage, to trace The Sikhs

briefly the history of Sikhism. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, there appeared in the north-west of India, a great religious reformer. His name was Nanak (born in 1468) and he was a Khatiri, or trader, by caste. He grew tired of priestly pretensions and spent his time in quest of religious truth. Like Kabir, he preached against 'the hollowness of conventional belief and mechanical rites.' He denounced both Hinduism and Muhammadanism alike. "O brethren!" he used to say like Kabir, "the Vedas and the Quran are false, and free not the mind from anxiety.....God can be obtained by humility and prayer, self-restraint, searching of the heart, and fixed gaze on Him." What then is Sikhism? It is a belief in one God. It is opposed to idolatry and prohibits pilgrimages to shrines and does not recognise ceremonial impurity at birth and death. As a social system it refuses to recognise the caste system and hence Brahmanical supremacy.† Such was the nature of the religion founded by Nanak whose formula was the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

The cause of this religion which appealed to people on account of its novelty was ably served by the successors of

\* Mr. Z. Farooki, in his book—*Aurangzib and His Times* (1935)—says that the *jaziyah* was not intended to bring about the forced conversion of the Hindus, as Hindu servants of the state were exempted, and it was not mercilessly collected. He also says that no *farman* was sent to the governors ordering the destruction of temples in general and that old temples in the Mughal territories were intact. Muslim jurists were of the opinion that the law forbade the construction of new temples; and in reprisals in wars many temples were destroyed, particularly in Rajputana. Mr. Farooki refutes the charges that Aurangzib unduly depressed his Hindu nobles and servants and excluded the Hindus from public service and holds that he was opposed to making use of pressure in the matter of conversions. His arguments are unconvincing.

† See for a clear and concise account of the sect, *Imperial Gazetteer* (1909), Vol. I, pp. 426-427; and also G. C. Narang: *The Transformation of Sikhism* (1922, Lahore). For a more elaborate account of the Sikh Gurus and their teachings; see M. A. Macauliffe—*The Sikh Religion* (1909), 6 vols.

Nanak. The third Guru after him made the headship of the Sikh church hereditary. The fifth Guru, Arjun, was an able teacher of the faith (1581-1606).

History of the  
Sikh Church

He organised the church, collected tithes and offerings from the followers of

Nanak from every city. "The Guru was treated as a temporal king and girt round by a body of courtiers and ministers." Mention has already been made of his learning and erudition and of his subsequent execution by Jahangir, because he helped his rebellious son, Prince Khusrau.\* After Arjun, his son succeeded to the Pontificate. He was Har Govind who converted a pious body into a militant body corporate. He was bold enough to come in conflict with Emperor Shah Jahan. He died in 1645 and was succeeded by his son, Har Rai (1645-1661), who showed considerable independence in dealing with Aurangzib. He helped Dara in the course of his flight. He nominated his second son, Har Kishan, to be his successor, as his first son joined Aurangzib and ingratiated himself with the Mughals. A period of confusion then followed owing to the untimely death of Har Kishan. At last Tegh Bahadur succeeded to the Pontificate. He was the youngest son of Har Govind. He was both a brave soldier and a fanatical religious leader.

Tegh Bahadur was, before his selection as a Guru, a loyal soldier of the Emperor. He had fought in the Assam wars and covered himself with glory.

Tegh Bahadur,  
the ninth guru,  
assassinated

But the bigotry and fanaticism of Aurangzib inflamed him. He called upon the Hindus of Kashmir not to

submit themselves to the system of forcible conversion by the Emperor. This was too much for the autocrat. Tegh Bahadur was captured and taken to Delhi. The Emperor promised to spare his life, should he become a Muslim. On his refusal to do so, he was tortured for five days and then beheaded (1675). From this time the Sikhs became the most implacable foes of the Mughal empire and the Muslim

\* Sarkar and other writers maintain that Arjun's execution was prompted solely by political motives and that it was not a case of religious persecution and that before the reign of Aurangzib the Sikhs were never persecuted on religious grounds. Jahangir notes his dislike of the faith in his *Memoirs*.

enigmon. There began an open war between the Sikhs and Islam; and the son of the martyred Guru, Govind Rai, who became the tenth and last guru (1675-1708), fully avenged his father's death and converted, by several measures of reform, his followers into a martial community inspired by the closest ties of companionship and intense faith in the guru and the community. His story and the subsequent fortunes of the community will be narrated later.

We shall now proceed to an account of Aurangzib's wars against the Rajputs of Marwar (Jodhpur) and Mewar (Udaipur). The kingdom of Marwar lies westwards beyond the Aravalli hills. Its ruler in the time of Aurangzib, was Jaswant Singh who had already rendered loyal, though inefficient, service to the Mughals. Fruitless against Sivaji and his Maratha horsemen, he was now transferred to a small command near the Khaibar Pass. Worn out in the service of a faithless over-  
 The Rajput war

reign, he died on 10th December 1678.\* He left no heir to succeed him. Immediately after hearing the news, the Emperor ordered the seizure of Marwar. Three causes weighed with the greedy king in seizing the Rajput state. In the first place, 'the shortest and easiest trade route from the Mughal capital to the rich manufacturing city of Ahmadabad and the busy port of Cambay' † through Marwar. In the second place, if Marwar were to be converted into a Muslim state, he could easily attack Mewar whose rulers were proud. Lastly, with Marwar destroyed, Aurangzib hoped that all opposition to his anti-Hindu policy would disappear. Thus commercial, political and religious motives combined to bring about one of the most unrighteous of territorial annexations.

Now it so happened that the two wives of Jaswant gave birth each to a boy and in vain did they implore the Emperor to recognise one of them as the successor of Jaswant. The only reply of the inexorable Mughal was to order that the infants with

gave birth each to a boy and in vain did they implore the Emperor to recognise one of them as the successor of Jaswant. The only reply of the inexorable Mughal was to order that the infants with

\*Dr. Smith apparently supports the view of Col. Tod that Jaswant was poisoned by Aurangzib, *Oxford History of India* p. 438.

†Sarkar : *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 366.



their mothers should be confined in the prison—fortress of of Nurgarh. But from this fate they were rescued by the genius of a Rajput, Durgadas, one of the most loyal sons of Marwar, the very soul of Rajput honour and the flower of Rahtor chivalry.\* He fought a pitched battle with the guards surrounding the prison, snatched away the infants and the Ranis from their custody and reached Marwar safely. †

In August 1679, Aurangzib himself went to Rajputana and directed the conquest of the country from Ajmer.

After a three days' pitched battle near  
 Fall of Jodhpur Lake Pushkar, in which both sides lost  
 (Marwar) heavily, Aurangzib annexed Marwar

formally. But the trouble was not over. A sort of guerilla warfare was continued. The whole of Rajputana was ravaged. Narrating this incident, says Tod in his own inimitable way: "As the cloud pours water upon the earth, so did Aurang pour his barbarians over the land..... Judhpur fell and was pillaged; and all the great towns in the plains of Mairta, Didwana and Rohit shared a similar fate. The emblems of religion were trampled under foot, the temples thrown down and mosques erected on their sites." §

The conquest of Marwar was but a prelude to the subjugation of Mewar (Udaipur), then under Maharana Raj Singh. The persecuted ladies of the

War against Marwar court were also closely related  
 Mewar (Udaipur) to the Maharana. Besides, a rigorous collection of *jaziya* in the Mewar state

was recently ordered by the Emperor. These reasons impelled the brave Rana to take up the cause of Marwar. This brought the Mughal forces under Prince Akbar to Udaipur (January 1680). The Rana evacuated the capital which was plundered by the Mughal soldiery and artillery

\* We have not the space to narrate the thrilling story of how Durgadas brought the ladies and the infants safe to Marwar. The student is recommended to read the pages of Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 375, ff.

† Ajit, son of Jaswant, was secretly brought up in a monastery at Abu.

§ Tod: *Annals of Mewar*, Chap. VII, p. 478 in the Popular Edition of 1914, Vol. II.

which was efficiently served by European gunners. The temples were razed to the ground both at Udaipur and at Chitor. The war dragged on. Prince Akbar with his able lieutenants, Tahawwar Khan and Syed Hassan Ali Khan, won some victories, but sustained very heavy losses by the surprise attacks of the Maharana in the neighbourhood of Chitor.\* The Rajputs were helped by a friendly peasantry and easily gained an ascendancy over the enemy. When Aurangzib retired to Ajmer, the Rajputs boldly attacked the Mughal outposts and cut off their supplies. After Akbar had suffered several reverses, the Emperor removed him from command in Mewar and tried fruitlessly to penetrate into the country. The war ended in June 1681 and a peace was concluded. The Rana had to cede certain territories to Aurangzib in consideration of which *jaziya* was not to be levied in the Mewar state.

The war with Marwar continued in a desultory fashion throughout the reign of Aurangzib. The political results of the struggle with the Rajputs may now be stated. Firstly, Aurangzib failed to achieve decisive success in warfare; thereby the imperial prestige sustained damage. Secondly, his resources were wasted in the two small regions of Marwar and Mewar. Thirdly, he lost the means of obtaining some of the finest and most loyal recruits for his army. Fourthly, as a result of the bold stand of these two Rajput states, lawlessness spread to Malwa and other areas and imperilled the Emperor's march to the Deccan. "This was the harvest," observes Sarkar truly, "that Jalal-ud-din, Akbar's great-grandson, reaped from sowing the whirlwind of religious persecution and suppression of nationalities."

To add to the poignancy of the situation created by the Rajput war, the Emperor's son, Prince Akbar, rebelled in 1681. Appointed to the command against Mewar, he was slack in his duty and proved himself generally incapable. Aurangzib severely rebuked him and transferred him to Marwar. Smarting under the insult, the Prince entered into secret negotiations both with Durgadas, the Marwar

Results of the struggle

Rebellion of Prince Akbar

\* Sarkar : *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 39.

patriot, and with the Maharana of Mewar. The plan was to attack the Emperor at Ajmer and dethrone him. If Akbar had been more vigorous, the scheme could have succeeded, for, at that time the Mughal forces were employed in different directions and not many soldiers remained with Aurangzib at Ajmer. But "Akbar was not the man to take time by the forelock." He delayed and the Emperor had time to gather his men for a proper defence.

However, the Emperor tried guile first before using force against Akbar. He forged a letter in the latter's name; and in it Akbar was made to say that everything was ready for betraying the Rajputs to him. This had the desired effect. The Rajputs naturally deserted Prince Akbar, who, when he found out the trick played upon him by his father, fled into the interior of Rajputana and sought refuge with Durgadas. This nobleman after a perilous journey, conducted him safely to the Maratha court of Sambhaji. Prince Akbar stayed for a few years in the Maratha country. He fled to Persia where he died an exile (1704).

The rebellion of Akbar had a decisive effect on the Rajput war. It drew the bulk of the Mughal troops into Marwar and relieved the pressure on Mewar. The Maharana boldly tried reprisals and raided the Mughal provinces of Gujarat and Malwa. But he died suddenly and was succeeded by a worthless son. At last peace was made with Mewar (June 1681). The Mughals withdrew from Mewar and the Maharana was recognised and given a high *mansab*. The war had been disastrous to Mewar whose plains were completely ravaged by the enemy. Fighting continued on in Marwar which was "turned into a wilderness during the truceless conflict which constitutes Jodhpur history during the next thirty years." The Rahtors, under the able lead of Durgadas, fought a guerilla warfare and harassed the imperial troops into utter exhaustion. At last, in 1707, Prince Ajit Singh entered Jodhpur in triumph and was acknowledged formally by the Emperor.

## SECTION II. AURANGZIB IN THE DECCAN

It remains for us to trace briefly Aurangzib's last campaigns in the Deccan. The death of Sivaji in 1680 encouraged the Emperor to proceed south and fulfil the mission of his life—the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda.

The Deccan campaigns of the Mughals

Aurangzib has been regarded as having committed a blunder in destroying Bijapur and Golconda first instead of crushing the Maratha power with the help of these two states. But it was impossible that the Deccan Sultanates which had always enjoyed the help of Maratha

Aurangzib's policy towards the Deccan states

soldiers and encountered the unceasing hostility of the Mughal Empire, could have any sympathy with, or inclination for, an alliance with the Mughals. Again,

we are told that Aurangzib should have left the Deccan Sultanates in independence so as "to serve as the police of the Deccan against the growing Maratha lawlessness which finally proved too strong for the Mughals." But both the Mussalman kingdoms of the Deccan were now in the last stage of decline and marked by lawlessness and provincial turbulence; and they could not at all have curbed the Maratha forces under Sambhaji and the other Maratha commanders.

Prince Akbar's rebellion and flight to the Maratha court compelled Aurangzib not only to patch up a peace with the Rajputs, but also to resolve to crush the power of Sambhaji and render Akbar impotent for mischief.

For more than a year after his arrival in the Deccan in the end of 1681, the Emperor remained undecided as to

with Sambhaji

what he should immediately do. Prince Akbar, after stopping for a considerable time at the Maratha court, weakened by Sambhaji's thoughtlessness and the defection of many of the old nobles, despaired of ever being effectually helped by him and tried to fly away to Persia. A Mughal army invaded the Konkan, in 1683, when Sambhaji was involved in a war with the Portuguese and the Sidi admiral of the Mughals carefully watched the seas to prevent Akbar's

escape. The operations of the Mughal army were not fruitful of effective results, though many forts were taken and some ladies of Sambhaji's family were captured. Though Sambhaji wasted time in dissipation, his ministers were wise enough to aid Bijapur when it was attacked by the Mughals in 1685. Thus, in this year, the Mughal forces were concentrated about Bijapur and the pressure on the Marathas diminished greatly.

The condition of Bijapur was hopeless; the administration was disorganised; but the defences of the city and its inner citadel were almost impregnable. **Final advance against Bijapur** against the siege appliances known in the seventeenth century. The Mughals were slow and clumsy in their siege operations; and the Adil Shah now began to get the help of allies like Golconda and the Maratha state. A famine broke out in the Mughal camp; and even after the lapse of fifteen months, the besiegers had no decisive gain. It was only the immediate presence of Aurangzib that quickened the operations and a vigorous assault led to the capitulation of the Adil Shah and the downfall of the Bijapur monarchy (September, 1686).

In 1685 the attack on Golconda also began; but Prince Muazzam who was in charge of the operations, thought it better to conclude a truce. **Bijapur annexed** Bijapur was annexed in 1686, and thus the Adil Shahi dynasty came to an end. Next, the peace with Golconda was broken in a perfidious manner and war once again ensued. The causes of the war were that Sultan Abul Hasan employed infidels to carry on the work of administration; that the Sultan loved wine himself and encouraged vice in others; that he had employed Marathas in his army and that he had paid subsidies to "the accursed Sambhaji," the son of Sivaji.\*

We shall not follow the wearisome details of this struggle. The siege of Golconda lasted for more than eight months. It was ably defended both by the Sultan and his far-famed lieutenant, Abdur Razzaq Khan Lari, <sup>who</sup> and w<sup>r</sup>

\* Haig: *Historic Landmarks of the Deccan*, p. 192.

heroism and loyalty to his master stood in strange contrast to the perfidy, dishonesty and corruption of the Mughal generals.\* Nevertheless it fell in October 1687. The spoils from the fort were great. Sultan Abul Hasan was sent a prisoner to Daulatabad. In his fall he displayed self-control and dignity; and the historian Sarkar says that nothing in his reign "became him like the ending of it." Bijapur was made a regular *subah* of the Mughal empire; but several campaigns had to be fought in order to bring into submission the regions on its south and south-west. The city of Bijapur quickly fell into a ruinous condition. With the fall of Bijapur and Golconda, the Mughal empire reached its greatest extent, extending as far as Tanjore in the South. But the annexation of these two states and the extinction of the Sultanates formed a political blunder. Bijapur and Golconda in subordinate alliance with the Mughal empire

\* Khafi Khan, the contemporary historian, writes thus of Abdur Razzaq; and it amply bears quotation:—"Like a drop of water flowing into the sea, or like a mote of the sunbeam pressing onward to assail the sun, he rushed upon the army, and, with valour and bravery beyond mortal comprehension,

Khafi Khan on  
Abdur Razzaq

fought with all the power of valiant manhood, shouting the while, "My life, while it lasts, is an offering to my master, Abul Hasan." At each moment he advanced a step farther forward amongst thousands who struck at him with their swords, until, it might be said, so severe were his wounds, that he was fighting with his own blood. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he was covered with countless wounds, each one of which appeared to be mortal. But, since his hour had not arrived, he fell not until the gate of the citadel was reached, but gave way slowly still fighting. He received twelve wounds in the face, so that the skins of his forehead fell as a veil over his eyes and nose, and when it was afterwards raised, it was found that one of his eyes had been destroyed by a sword-cut, while the wounds on his body were in number like the stars of the heaven. His horse, too, smitten with countless wounds, at last stood trembling, when Abdur Razzaq, his strength being now spent dropped the reins and allowed it to bear him whither it would. It wandered to a garden near the citadel, known as *Nagina Bagh*, and there stood under a cocoanut palm, where Razzak threw himself down. On the morning of the next day, some of Husaini Beg's men who chanced to be passing, saw him and identified him. Moved with generous pity for so valiant a foe they raised him, half-dead, on to a bed and conveyed him with his horse and arms to his house: and his family and servants busied themselves in attending to his wounds. I have placed on record this account of a fraction of his valour. What more I have to say regarding the loyalty of the most valiant hero will, please God, be related hereafter." (See Elliot and Dowson; *History of India*, Vol. VII,

would have stood as a bulwark against the growing Maratha aggression to some degree.

The remaining years of Aurangzib's life were spent in a fruitless endeavour to subdue the Marathas. Only the leading events in this struggle will be chronicled. When Aurangzib was conquering Bijapur and Golconda, Sambhaji made no effort to meet the danger that threatened him also and to avert their fall. His government was demoralised and he continued to indulge in sensual pleasures. There were frequent rebellions and plots against him and his evil counsellor and favourite, Kavi Kulesh, as well as a plot to dethrone him and crown his step-brother, Rajaram. In 1687, the Mughal general, Muqarrab Khan, captured Sambhaji and his favourite and family; and the Emperor put him to death in a most barbarous way. Sahu, Sambhaji's son, was brought up in the imperial harem.

During the years 1690—1698, the imperial resources were wasted before the strong fort of Jinji (Gingee) held by the Marathas. Though the Emperor was uniformly successful in his operations against the Marathas in 1688 and 1689, and his armies marched east and south and occupied Raichur and Adoni, Sera and Bangalore, Wandiwash and Conjeevaram (in the Golconda Karnatak) and Bankapur and Belgaum, yet peace was not in sight. The Mughal arms received a sharp set-back in 1690; and Jinji in the Karnatak coast country, occupied by Sivaji, now became the centre of Maratha national resistance. Aurangzib had not a proper understanding of the Maratha people and their capacity for resistance and underrated their national strength. Everywhere from Poona to Jinji, right across the Peninsula, the Marathas became the centres and instruments of resistance to Mughal authority and administration and they were aided by various predatory tribes. The long-drawn out operations at Jinji were discreditable to Mughal arms and ended in the disgrace of Kambaksh, the youngest, and now favourite, son of the Emperor and the escape of Rajaram with the passive

connivance of the Mughal general. Jinji fell; but the bird had flown away.

In the course of the unceasing operations against the Marathas in the Deccan, the Mughals contrived to capture Satara, Raigarh and other forts; but the old emperor had to conduct every operation in person, if it was to be effective.

The last years of the reign

The last years of his life (1699—1707) were “a repetition of the same sickening tale—a hill-fort captured by him after a vast expenditure of time, men and money, the fort recovered by the Marathas from the weak Mughal garrison after a few months, and its siege begun again by the Mughals a year or two later.” The wastage of the war was computed at about the loss of 100,000 men and three times that number of cattle, every year. The economic exhaustion of the Deccan was terrible. Trade had ceased practically; the Emperor was fully conscious of his stupendous failure; and he died, a sorrow-stricken man, with a loveless and dreary home, at Ahmadnagar, early in 1707.

The condition of Northern India was very sad. Government had become almost bankrupt and the provincial *subhadars* had become too weak to effectively maintain their power. The older and more settled provinces were drained of their man-power and wealth to feed the inexhaustible Deccan requirements; and “the best soldiers, the highest officers and all the collected revenue were sent to the Deccan, while the *subahs* of Hindustan were henceforth left to minor officers with small contingents and incomes quite inadequate for maintaining viceregal authority.” There was no imperial court in Northern India to maintain the cultural traditions of an earlier age. The Emperor was far away in the Deccan leading a rough camp life; and the culture of the aristocracy decayed; their wealth and patronage of arts declined; and “the whole of the intellectual classes of India slowly fell back to a lower level.”

Aurangzib possessed many virtues. His devotion to the Muslim faith and the vigour with which he enforced the Quranic Law on all will excite nothing but the admi-



ration of every Muslim. His life was simple and his austerity commendable. His enormous industry and tenacity of purpose are worth imitation by

**Character of  
Aurangzib**

all rulers. But as a sovereign of India, he miserably failed in his purpose. He

did not understand, and even if he did, he would not practise, the benign principle of Hindu-Mussalman unity inaugurated by Akbar the Great. He lived for his religion and achieved much for it, but not for the empire. The many blunders he had committed were more or less responsible for the disintegration of the empire. The levying of the *jaziya* was a political mistake of the first magnitude. This roused the bitter opposition of the Hindus who from that time could not conscientiously reconcile themselves to the Mughal rule. His programme of temple destruction drove the discontent deeper and created resentment in the Hindu mind that has not yet vanished. His wanton attack of the brave Rajput clans of Marwar and Mewar suddenly brought about a deterioration of the Mughal army as no longer recruits could be obtained on a large scale from those hardy warrior-tribes. He angered the Sikhs by murdering their Guru; and this was the direct cause of converting a religious community into a fighting order. His Afghan

**His blunders**

policy was of no great utility; the tribal peace had to be purchased at a heavy

cost which drained the Mughal treasury. He failed to realise the growing importance of the Marathas; and instead of conciliating their movement, he allowed it to grow and merely temporised matters with them. His conquest and annexation of Bijapur and Golconda facilitated the plundering campaigns of the Marathas which, in the end, proved disastrous to the Mughal arms as well as to their prestige. His Deccan campaign was conceived in a spirit of imbecility. It proved to be the grave of his reputation. Finally, it cost him his life. His long absence in the Deccan led to grave disorders in the north where the peasantry, groaning under the weight of heavy taxation, became ready to rebel. Thus the elements of disruption began to appear even during his life-time. Few will disagree with the following

delineation of Aurangzib's character and the summary of his attainments. "Aurangzib's life had been a vast failure, indeed, but he had failed grandly. He had pitted his conscience against the world and the world had triumphed over it. He had marked out a path of duty and had steadfastly pursued it, in spite of its utter impracticability. His glory is that he could not force his soul, that he dared not desert the colours of his faith...The great Puritan of India was of such stuff as wins the martyr's crown." \*

## CHAPTER XV

### THE HISTORY OF THE MARATHAS (UP TO 1714)

#### ✓ SECTION I. THE FORMATION OF THE NATION

The home-land of the Marathas is Maharashtra. The boundaries of Maharashtra have varied from time to time. In the sixteenth century it was bounded on the north by the Satpuras. That is, it extended from Nandod on the west to the Wainganga, east of Nagpur. On the east and south, the boundary followed the western bank of the same river up to its confluence with the Wardha and thence it should be traced westwards to Mahore through Manikgarh. From Mahore it passed in an irregular line to Goa. On the west there is the Indian Ocean. In the seventeenth century the centre of Maratha power and resistance lay in the Konkan, the narrow strip of territory between the Western Ghats and the sea. The whole country is extremely hilly and rugged ; and the Ghats particularly send long spurs projecting into the Deccan eastwards. These enclose delightful little valleys from which little streams take their source and roll away to join the mighty Godavari or the Krishna. The whole country is very well-watered and the principal rivers are the Narmada, the Tapti, the Godavari, the Bhima and the Krishna. The banks of the Godavari and the Bhima with its tributaries, the Neera and the Maun, are celebrated for their breed of horses " which, though small, are accounted the best and the hardest that are reared in the Deccan." \* Again, " the whole of the Ghats and the neighbouring mountains often terminate towards the top in a wall of smooth rock, the highest points of which, as well as detached portions on isolated hills, form natural fortresses, where the only labour required is to get access to the level space which generally lies on the summit. Various princes, at different times, have profited by these positions. They have cut flights of

\* Grant-Duff : *A History of the Marathas* (4th ed.), Vol. I, p. 8.

steps or winding roads up the rocks, fortified the entrance  
 with a succession of gateways, and  
 Forts erected towers to command the approaches, and thus studded the whole of the region about the Ghats and their branches with forts, which, but for frequent experience, would be deemed impregnable.”\*

Maharashtra can be divided into three distinct regions: the sea-board known as the Konkan, the Satpura and the Ghat regions known as the Mawal, and the Desh represented by the rolling plains of the east. In the course of

Regional divisions

centuries, the two latter divisions came under the sway of foreigners, especially Muslims. Maharashtra enjoyed natural advantages of position and climate, such as were not given to other table-lands like Mysore and Malwa. “By reason of its position . . . the table-land of Maharashtra has been inhabited by a population in which the Aryans and the Dravidians have been mixed in due proportion, so as to retain the good points of both without exaggerating their defects.” Ranade says that owing to the due proportion of

The features of the people

different ethnic elements in the population, the institutions and the religion of the country were able to maintain an equilibrium rarely found in other parts of India. The village communities were hardy and survived all political vicissitudes; and the *panchayat* system and the *ryotwari mirasi* tenure of land that prevailed, gave a stability and a strong sense of independence to the peasantry. Extreme sectarianism was absent in the religious life of the country; and the lower classes had been raised to a higher level of social consciousness by the teachings of the religious reformers. Even the Muhammadans of the land came under these moderating influences and lost some of their bigotry. Thus Ranade concludes:—“Owing to the nature of the country and the character of its people and their institutions as described above, the sense of local autonomy and independence has been developed to an extent which prevented the country from being retained under one political control for a long time both under Hindu and

Muhammadian rulers." \* The true home of the Marathas has always been the Konkan and the hilly and rugged regions bordering the Western Ghats. Thus their predominant racial qualities were "activity, courage, self-reliance, self-respect and love of equality." No ruler of the Deccan ever attempted to break these mountaineers; and even if he did, the attempt was a failure.

**The physical characteristics and racial qualities** In their methods of fighting and tactics employed, they resembled the Afghans to a great degree. A not very fertile soil always drove them to seek employment in the army of the Deccan Sultanates; and thus for centuries together the profession of arms had a greater charm for the Maratha than quill-driving and accounting in the dingy halls of the plains. Caste, again, did not disintegrate the society as it did in the richer and more civilised parts of the Deccan. A sense of approximate equality prevailed in Maharashtra. And this levelling tendency, characteristic of a society whose free and natural growth was not tampered with by fiat of church and state, was furthered by the growth of religious movements in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The latter were reformatory in their object. A long line of saints and prophets laid stress on 'the sanctity of conduct rather than mere birth.' They cared more for a living personal faith than for ritual. "The names of Tukaram (born about 1568), of Ramdas (born 1608), of Vaman Pandit (born 1636), and of Ekanath (born 1528) still retain their ascendancy over the minds of the people of Maharashtra." †

**Religion fosters unity**

The Muhammadan power in the Deccan had become gradually penetrated and dominated by Hindu influences. It was not constantly reinforced by fresh streams of immigrants from the north. The revenue management and all accounts in the Bahmani government were in the hands of Hindu officials, and the records of village accounts were always kept in the vernacular. Vijayanagar had helped in maintaining a balance of power

**Hindu influences and revival in the Deccan**

*Rise of the Maratha Power*, p. 25.

*Ibid.* p. 10

between the Hindus and the Muslims of the Deccan. Maratha soldiers had freely enrolled themselves in the armies of the Sultans; and many of their leaders rose to be powerful captains in enjoyment of large *jaghirs*. Several Maratha families had risen to great power and influence long before Sivaji's time. The consequence was that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Sultanates of the Deccan were "virtually controlled both in the civil and the military departments by Maratha statesmen and Maratha warriors and the hill-forts near the Ghats and the country thereabout were in the hands of Maratha jaghirdars who were only nominally dependent on these Mahomedan sovereigns."

When the Mughal invasions of the Deccan began under Akbar, both the Muhammadan rulers and their Maratha chiefs felt a common interest in resisting the invaders. "The new danger required new tactics; but above all tactics, what was wanted was a common spirit, a common feeling of interest, a common patriotism born of a liberal religious fervour. The scattered power of the Maratha chiefs had to be united in a confederacy, animated by a common purpose and sanctified by a common devotion to the country." Sivaji realised the urgency and need of this task and represented in himself both the potency of this new consciousness and the capacity to realise the ideal.

The Marathas possessed certain inherent weaknesses. These defects in their character were seen in their true colours in the eighteenth century. Many lived mainly by plunder and did not consider it immoral to take bribes.

Defects in Maratha character They were lacking in business capacity, in the ability to co-operate with others, in tact for managing instruments and colleagues.\* Yet notwithstanding defects, they possessed all the elements that go to make up a nation, *viz.*, common language, race, tradition and history. It required only the magic touch of Sivaji to weld them into a national state.

\* See Sirkar's *Sivaji*, pp. 19-21, for an admirable summing up of their character.

## SECTION II. SIVAJI AND THE BUILDING UP OF THE MARATHA NATION

Sivaji was the son of Shahji Bhonsle. The latter claimed descent from the ancient house of Udaipur. A member of that house migrated to the Deccan in the time of the first Bahmani Sultan; and he and his successors assumed the title of Bhonsle after the family fief of Bhosaval in Udaipur.\* Sivaji's grandfather, Maloji, became a great noble of the Ahmadnagar state; and he and his brother had acquired the title of Leader of Armies. His son was Shahji who was born in 1602 A. D. Early in life Shahji had entered the service of Malik Ambar and served him loyally almost down to the Abyssinian's death in 1626. But the misdeeds of the Ahmadnagar Sultan soon made Shahji revolt against him and incline towards the Mughals. His gallantry and bravery quickly attracted the attention of Emperor Shah Jahan who not only conferred on him the fiefs of Poona and Supa, but gave him other lands. Very soon, however, owing to the submission of Ahmadnagar, the Emperor changed his mind and took away from Shahji most of the lands he previously gave. Quite disgusted, the Maratha soldier resigned his service and transferred himself to Bijapur which then was at war with the Mughals. At Bijapur, he planned an attack against Daulatabad; and even though he failed in the enterprise, he inflicted considerable damage on the Mughal troops. He interfered in Ahmadnagar politics and even set up a ruler there in opposition to the Mughals. Shahji's continued employment by Adil Shah of Bijapur brought on a war between the Sultan and the Mughals. In this struggle Bijapur fared very badly and Shahji himself was forced to give up a few important fortresses he had captured (1636); while a treaty was concluded by the Mughals with Bijapur.

\* Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, p. 113. Dr. Balkrishna, in his *Shivaji the Great*, Vol. I; Part I; *Shaji* (1932) proves that the fortunes of the Bhonsles (or Bhosles) had risen high even from the beginning of the Bahmani Kingdom; and even by 1454 they were in possession of several jaghirs like Mudhol, Wai, Devagiri etc., p. 50.)

Now Shahji was presented to the Bijapur Sultan who conferred upon him his jaghir of Poona and Supa and sent him shortly afterwards, along with Randulla Khan, for the conquest of the Mysore plateau and the Carnatic. He helped in the subjugation of the Ikkeri Nayak and the ruler of Srirangapatam and in the conquest of Sera and Bangalore (1608). In 1646-48, he brought about the capture of Vellore and Jinji. Then he was imprisoned by the Bijapur Sultan who suspected that he was aiming at independence in the Carnatic and intriguing with the rival Sultan of Golconda and the declining Raya of Chandragiri. He was, however, soon released and quickly regained the confidence of his master. Golconda was then greatly weakened by the defection of Mir Jumla who had consolidated his position in the Carnatic; and it was subsequently plundered by the Mughals. Bijapur was likewise threatened with a Mughal war and had to cede considerable territory and a large indemnity in 1657. During his last years in the Carnatic, Shahji tried to put down the refractory *poligars* and made wars with the Nayaks of Madura and Tanjore. He became the champion of the Hindu rajas and of Hindu culture. He made Marathi the language of the administration in his territories and became thus "the founder of Greater Maharashtra in South India." Shahji brought about the favourable circumstances for the successful establishment of Sivaji's independence. He attempted to set up an independent Maratha state in the South. He so weakened the Tanjore kingdom that it fell an easy prey into the hands of his son, Vyankoji. He probably inspired Sivaji's bold deeds against the Bijapur and Mughal forces and in 1662-3, and contrived to bring about a peace between his son, Sivaji and the Bijapur king. Sivaji had thus "a rich inheritance and a powerful incentive from his father for establishing Hindu Swarajya."

Shahji's later career

His work in South India

Shahji, the forerunner of Hindu Swarajya



Sivaji was born in 1630.\* His mother was Jijabai. His father had, however, married a second wife and did not very much care for Jijabai and Sivaji. It is said that father and son had not seen each other for a number of years. Even as a lad Sivaji showed a high degree of independence. Thus he quarrelled with a few Mussalman butchers who dragged cattle to the shambles; he also refused to bow to the Sultan of Bijapur in the manner of the courtiers. Fearing that the boy might spoil his prospects of advancement, Shahji sent away Sivaji and his mother to his fief at Poona. With them went the tutor and the guardian of young Sivaji, Dadaji Kondadev.

Shahji and  
Sivaji

Of the many factors that influenced the mind and shaped the character of Sivaji, the training he had received from his tutor, Dadaji Kondadev, was not the least important. The latter acted not only as Sivaji's land-agent, but also as the young lad's guide and philosopher. The Brahman gave Sivaji an excellent training in the war-like practices of the time and allowed him to wander about the woods and mountain passes for days together, so that Sivaji was familiar with every winding pass or craggy route of the country. Religious instruction formed part of Sivaji's course of training at the hands of Dadaji. He was taught all about the inspired saints of Pandharpur, about the heroism of Bhima, the archery of Arjuna and of the chivalrous courage of Yudishtira. "He would repeat to them the wise sayings of Bhishma, in which are contained

Sivaji's educa-  
tion and forma-  
tion of his  
character

\* Saka 1551 (corresponding to February 1630) is held to be the date of birth of Sivaji, according to the *Jedhe Sakavali*, the *Siva-Bharata* and the Tanjore inscription of 1803 A.D. Grant-Duff gives 3rd May, 1627, as the birth-date on the basis of the Marathi *Bhaskars*. It has been suggested that the Bhaskars caught hold of the horoscope of one of the brothers of Sivaji; and that astrologers concocted a horoscope for Sivaji with five planets in their *uchha* (ascendant) following the general belief that all heroes have such a conjunction at their birth. The planets were not so in 1630; and they were roughly so in 1627. The controversy as to the exact date of his birth cannot be finally settled unless there is forthcoming reliable evidence of a strictly contemporary character. (See C. V. Vaidya-Shivaji the Founder of Maratha Swaraj (1931) Ch. IV; and *Shivaji Souvenir, Tercentenary Celebration, Bombay* (1927)—The Jedhe Chronology (Eng. Section, I.)

the experience and wisdom of two thousand years of Indian war, statesmanship and government.”\*

More potent in their effect than the influence of Dadaji were the teachings of Sivaji's own mother, Jijabai. Deserted by her husband and thrown on her own resources, the pious Jijabai instilled the lessons of self-help and bravery in Sivaji. She engaged special tutors for her darling to expound the Puranas. ‘Be brave and be pious’ was her advice to her son.

When Sivaji was eighteen years of age, the question of a career loomed large before his mind. He was determined not to serve either the Mughal or the Sultan. The inconsistency of the Mughals and the shifty nature of Deccan politics were equally distasteful to him. He was in favour of carving out an independent principality and desired to be his own master. The not very valiant Dadaji shuddered at this idea and even reported to Shahji about the wild projects of Sivaji. However, when his guardian died in 1647, Sivaji began executing his scheme, freed from the obligation of listening to the advice of a much revered tutor.

The political condition of Bijapur offered a tempting opportunity for Sivaji to commence his career of conquest and annexation, and to create, in fact, a Maratha state. The most vigorous of all the Deccan Sultans, Muhammad Adil Shah, fell ill in 1646; and from that time till his death in 1656, he never undertook any serious enterprise. The administration also grew inert. Sivaji took time by the forelock and in 1646 seized Torna, a Bijapur fortress. Immense was the treasure he found there. Protests from the Bijapur government and even from his own father, now in the service of Adil Shah, were answered by Sivaji by the taking of more forts. He annexed the *jaghir* of Supa, and took the forts of Chakan, Kondana and Purandar to mention only a few of them.

Crossing next the Western Ghats, he entered the Konkan, invested Kalyan and took it. He went southwards to the Kolaba district and stirred up the local chiefs against Muslim rule.

\* Kincaid and Parasnis : *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. I, p. 130.

These activities of Sivaji created consternation at Bijapur; and, as a counterblast, Sultan Adil Shah imprisoned Shahji, Sivaji's father. This had the desired effect. Sivaji, anxious for his father's safety, stopped, albeit temporarily, his career of aggressive warfare. At the same time he did not like to be outwitted by the Bijapur government. He now turned his eyes towards Prince Murad who was at that time viceroy of the Deccan. Sivaji wrote through Murad to the Emperor that he would accept imperial service in return for the release of his father. But Shahji contrived to obtain his freedom through the efforts of two noblemen of Bijapur.\*

Sivaji was inactive during the period 1649-55. In 1655 he obtained by violence and treachery the fort of Javli, as, without it in his hands, he could not freely go to the south and south-west. By 1657 Sivaji's kingdom had considerably expanded; and it contained nearly forty hill-forts.

Hitherto Sivaji avoided attacking the Mughal territories, as he did not want to come in conflict with Aurangzib, the inexorable viceroy of the Deccan. But a war between the Empire and Bijapur began in 1657; and Sivaji, taking advantage of the situation and being offered tempting bribes by the Bijapur Sultan, took to plundering the Mughal territory and in a short time took the whole of the Konkan with the exception of the foreign settlements, viz., Bombay, Goa and Janjira.

The loss of the Konkan forts infuriated the Bijapuris; and the able and vigorous government of the day despatched Abdullah Bhatari, surnamed Afzal Khan, with a large force to punish Sivaji. This general boasted that he would bring the Maratha alive or dead. The story of his meeting Sivaji, the interview and Afzal's death by the thrust of the Tiger's

**The interview  
with Afzal Khan  
and the Tiger's  
Claws  
(Sept. 1659)**

\* Sarkar : *Shivaji and his Times*, p. 48.

Claws—has been narrated in the section on Aurangzib.\* Afzal Khan was advised to have recourse to dissimulation and treachery; and Sivaji had knowledge of this and endeavoured to counteract it. This bold coup of Sivaji demoralised the Bijapur officers, so that they began to evacuate forts and towns at his mere approach. Sivaji himself deemed this coup to be the most critical moment of his life; and to the Marathas, the fight appeared as “at once a war of national liberation and a crusade against the desecrator of temples.”

After scattering the forces of Afzal Khan, Sivaji entered the South Konkan country and took the fort of Panhala. Repeated attempts on the part of Bijapur to regain lost territory ended only in failure. At last, with the help of Shahji, it made peace with Sivaji, who was recognised master of all that he had taken.

The rest of Sivaji's career has been sketched already in the previous chapter. The following facts may be briefly recalled. His successes against Bijapur emboldened him to attack further Mughal territories. Aurangzib, growing uneasy about Sivaji, sent Shayista Khan against him. This general, as has been stated already, was humbled at Poona; and he escaped death with the loss of a thumb. Aurangzib then sent Prince Muazzam and Raja Jai Singh who were not more successful against Sivaji. Jai Singh, however, managed to bring about a reconciliation between the Mughal Emperor and Sivaji. In view of the friendly understanding, the latter accepted an invitation of the Emperor to see him at Agra. Insulted there, Sivaji was kept a prisoner. His escape from the prison, already described, forms one of the most thrilling and romantic episodes in Maratha history. Prince Muazzam and Raja Jai Singh, sent now against Sivaji, were equally helpless. On the other hand they persuaded the Emperor to follow a

\* For interesting legends concerning the episode, consult Sarkar's *Sivaji and his Times*: Chap. III; and the *Ballad of Afzal Khan* and Baikrishna: *Shivaji the Great*, Vol. I, Part II (1932)—Ch. III The Murder of Afzal Khan.

policy of conciliation with Sivaji. He was granted a *jaghir* in Berar, and the title of a Raja, and his right to collect *chauth*\* in the Ahmadnagar territories was practically recognised. In the meantime, Aurangzib's grip over the empire was loosening; and that was the Maratha's opportunity. In 1670 he once again attacked the Mughal territories, especially in Khandesh, and collected *chauth* from the Mughal dominions in that quarter. Aurangzib's frequent change of commanders and his intense suspicion of loyal servants merely furthered Sivaji's opportunities for plunder. The wealthy port of Surat was sacked by Sivaji on two occasions, in 1664 and in 1670. Raja Chhatra Sal Bundela who had left the Mughal service in disgust offered to serve under Sivaji against the Mughal Emperor. Sivaji advised him to recover and rule his own native land.

In 1673-74 the Mughal power in the Deccan had become greatly crippled; and the Emperor's immediate attention had to be diverted to the suppression of the Afghan tribes on the frontier. This interval was utilised by Sivaji to crown himself as an independent king and as the champion of Hindu *swaraj*. His claim to be descended of an ancient Kshatriya family was duly recognised; and his coronation took place with great pomp and ceremony, in June 1674, at Raigarh.† The English ambassador, Henry Oxinden, was present at the ceremony and he was invested with a robe of honour.

From 1674 to 1680, the year of his death, Sivaji was busy extending his kingdom in the south. He annexed the whole of Western Karnatak up to the modern Bellary District. The expansion of his power across the Ghats into the coast districts of the Konkan brought him into

\* For the origin of *chauth*, see Chap. II of S. N. Sen's *Military System of the Marathas* (1928).

† "It gave a religious sanction to the new position of Shivaji as the crowned king of *Hindavi Swarajya* and created a sentiment of patriotic love of country in the hearts of the Marathas, of such strength that it lasted one hundred years at least." (P. 248 of *Vaidya's Shivaji*.)

contact with the Abyssinians of the coast and caused him to build a navy for the protection of the coast and the conquest of Janjira, and of other Abyssinian naval strongholds. The Maratha naval power caused anxiety to the Sidis, the English and the Mughal power alike. Sivaji's navy often fought with the Sidi fleet; but the latter was not easily put down. He then went to Tanjore, successfully claimed his share of his father's *jaghir* from his brother Vyankoji and took Jinji and Vellore. Vyankoji's ex-minister, Ragunath Narayan, being angry with his own master, is said to have induced Sivaji to invade the south country and to have prepared for it by bringing about an understanding between the latter and the Sultan of Golconda. After reaching Hyderabad, Sivaji visited the shrine of Sri Saila, touched Madras and easily got possession of Jinji. He then pushed south to the bank of the Coleroon and came to an understanding with his half-brother, Vyankoji. On his return he secured Vellore and his father's *jaghirs* of Kolar, Bangalore and Sera. The territory annexed by him in the Carnatic was estimated to yield twenty lakhs of *hun* a year and included one hundred forts. But gold and not land was his chief object; and he peeled the country to the bones by his exactions. In his last days he also helped Bijapur to drive the Mughals out of that country.

Sivaji had now (1680) reached the zenith of his power. he had consolidated a large kingdom; Bijapur and Golconda were his allies; he had secured firmly his southern conquests by a chain of fortresses extending from Bednore to Jinji.

During the last days of his earthly existence, Sivaji enjoyed no peace of mind. His two sons, Sambhaji and Raja Ram, were quarrelling for the throne. This domestic strife threatened to undo the work of Sivaji. His brother at Tanjore, Vyankoji, who previously submitted, was also showing signs of disaffection. It is said that a few days before his death, Sivaji went to Parali on a visit to the

Saint Ramdas, embraced him and obtained his blessings. He died on 24th March 1680, after a seven days' illness.

At the time of his death, Sivaji held a large compact area with many detached places as well. **Extent of his sway** Excluding the foreign settlements, his *swaraj* extended from Gondavi in the north (about forty miles south-east of Surat) to Ponda in the south (about twenty miles east by south of Goa). "He had thannas in Carwar, Ankola and several places on the coast, where he shared the districts with the Deshmukhs. The chief of Soonda acknowledged his authority; and the Rana of Bednore paid him an annual tribute."\* Besides, he held tracts about Bellary and Kopaul, Tanjore, Bangalore, Vellore and Jinji. The total revenue of his kingdom was nearly nine crores of rupees.

There was a distinction between the *Swaraj* or Sivaji's own kingdom, what was called his 'old dominions,' and a wide and fluctuating belt of land outside **Maratha Swaraj and the Mughals** which was "subject to his power, but not owning his sovereignty." The former extended from Surat to Karwar along the coast and extended in the interior as far as Baglana in the north and Belgaum and the Tungabhadra near Bellary in the south. This *Swarajya* was divided into three provinces, each under a viceroy. In the latter territory which was termed *Mughlai*, Sivaji levied blackmail; and the ransom collected was popularly called *chauth*, because it amounted to one-fourth of the normal land revenue. The payment of *chauth* saved the district from the depredations of the Maratha soldiery, but did not impose on the Marathas any obligation to guard it from invasion and trouble. There were about two hundred and forty forts, in the territories, old and new, under Sivaji.

"Like the first Napoleon," says Ranade, "Sivaji in his time was a great organizer and a builder of civil institutions."† We shall study the essential details of Sivaji's civil and military organisation of his country. A sound revenue adminis-

\* Grant Duff : *History of the Marhatas* (4th Ed.), Vol. I, p. 253.

† Ranade : *Rise of the Maratha Power*, p. 115.

tration invariably enhances the happiness of the peasantry. Sivaji understood this to the full. He therefore introduced in his dominions the revenue policy of Malik Ambar who himself imitated the example of Todar Mall. But Sivaji was not a mere imitator. He knew the weakness in the system of Malik Ambar, *viz*, lack of method. Sivaji introduced a uniform standard of measure—the *kathi* or measuring rod, 5 cubits and 5 fists in length. With this rod—the unit of measurement—he ordered a systematic survey settlement. This was faithfully carried out by Annaji Datto, the principal revenue officer of Sivaji.\*

As is usual in India, land revenue formed the main item of revenue. At first, the Maratha state took 33% of the gross produce. Later on, Sivaji increased it to 40%, but abolished many cesses and taxes. Other sources of revenue were customs duties, profits from coinage, the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. The two latter were forced contributions, plainly blackmail, levied on the neighbouring districts which paid them rather than submit to wholesale pillage and plunder.†

Sivaji's military administration was exceptionally efficient. The forts of his kingdom formed the very soul of it. He therefore took great care in organizing them. Each fort was under the charge of three officers, a *havaladar*, a *sabnis* and a *sarnobat*. The first and last named officers were generally Marathas of good birth, whereas the *sabnis* was a Brahman. The duty of the *havaladar* was to keep the keys of the fort with him. The *sabnis* was in charge of accounts in general and the muster-roll in particular. For the commissariat work, very generally a new officer known as *karkhana navis* was appointed. Extensive regulations existed to prevent corruption on the part of these officers. Each fort was

\* S. N. Sen : *Administrative System of the Marathas* (1923) pp. 67-68.

† Ranade comes forward with a patriotic defence of this system. See *Rise of the Maratha Power*, pp. 224-225. See also S. N. Sen, quoted above, in p. 259.



well-stocked with provisions, stores and arms, so that it might stand a long siege.

There were about 30,000 or 40,000 cavalry men and twice that number of infantry men in the permanent service of Sivaji. There were also elephants, camels and artillery pieces. We saw how he started and developed a navy.

Sivaji's infantry was also divided into regiments, brigades and divisions. Lowest in rank was the *naik* in charge of nine soldiers; next came the *havaladar*, and over him the *jumledar*. He who commanded ten *jumledars* was known as *hazari* and there was a *sarnobat* exercising authority over seven *hazaris*.

The cavalry was of two classes, the regular horsemen equipped and maintained by the state, known as *bargirs* and the *shiledars* who hired themselves out to him and who brought to the field their own men and horses. Here also there was a regular gradation of rank and power. "Besides the regular forces, Sivaji could in times of emergency call the feudal forces of the Maratha *watandars*." This huge army was maintained by plunder. In the course of operations the soldiers were to obey implicitly certain rules, the important of them being (1) that no one should take with him a woman, female slave or dancing girl; (2) that no woman or child should be taken as prisoner of war; (3) that cows should not be seized, though bullocks might be taken for transport, (4) that Brahmans should on no account be molested; and (5) that no soldier should misconduct himself.\*

After the conquest of the Konkan, Sivaji organised a navy. His entire fleet consisted of two squadrons of two hundred vessels each. Most of the officers of the fleet were Mussalmans, whereas the men belonged to the Kolis and other sea-faring tribes of the Malabar Coast.† The principal port of Sivaji

\* Sarker : *Sivaji and his Times*, p. 467.

† See for Sivaji's navy, S. N. Sen's *Administrative System of the Marathas*, Chap. IV; and *Military System of the Marathas*, Ch. X.

was Malwan. The fleet policed the waters of the Konkan, but, more often than not, took to plundering in the open sea. The foreigners were the worst sufferers in this respect. In point of strength, Sivaji's navy was woefully inefficient. Besides this fleet, Sivaji maintained a strong mercantile navy.

For purposes of general administration, Sivaji maintained a council consisting of eight members, generally known as the *Ashta-Pradhan*. The ministers were (1) the *Peishwa* or prime-minister, who looked after the general administration, (2) the *Auditor*, who checked public accounts, (3) the *Chronicler*, the historian of the court, (4) the *Superintendent*, who looked after the drafting of royal letters, (5) the *Foreign Secretary*, or *Dabir* who advised on matters of peace or war, (6) the *Commander-in-Chief* (*Senapati*), (7) the *Pandit Rao* or the ecclesiastical head, who was judge of canon law, royal almoner and censor of public morals, and (8) the *Chief Justice* (*Nyayadish*). All the ministers except the commander-in-chief were Brahman; and all of them were liable for military service in times of emergency. The ministers had no initiative and no power to dictate policy. They were merely to be advisers to the ruler and to carry out his instructions. They did not constitute a cabinet in the modern sense. The Peishwa was more important than the other ministers, because he was closer to the ruler and enjoyed more of his confidence.

Sivaji was a king of strong religious convictions. Unlike his contemporary Aurangzib, he was not a persecutor of other faiths. He patronised Brahman and Muslim saints alike. He was greatly influenced in his daily conduct by his spiritual guide—Saint Ramdas. Sir J. N. Sarkar, however, denies that the saint had ever influenced his state policy. But the legends and traditions of the country indicate that Ramdas, instead of silently watching the political career of Sivaji, actually advised him to scorn autocracy as an ideal of government.

To sum up then, Sivaji was a born leader of men, one of those few men of the world destined to accomplish great things. Aurangzib himself came at last to appreciate Sivaji's qualities. In the words of a Muslim historian Sivaji was "entirely guiltless of baser sins and was scrupulous of the honour of the women and children of the Muslims when they fell into his hands." He found the Maratha race 'scattered like atoms through many areas. He united them and formed them into a nation. This he achieved in the face of strenuous opposition by mighty powers like the Mughals, the Portuguese and the Bijapur Sultan. In the midst of his struggles against these powers, in hourly peril of his own life, he organized an excellent system of administration. He protected the cow, the Brahman and the Vedas. The basis of his state was the moral teaching of the Pandharpur saints. The oppressed Hindus of the period found in Sivaji their only hope. Reviled Hinduism once again reared its mighty head and demonstrated to the world that neither the sword nor the *jaziya*, nor the iconoclastic fury of emperors could suppress the eternal *Vedas*. In the words of the great historian Sarkar: "He (Sivaji) has proved by his example that the Hindu race can build a nation, found a state, defeat enemies; they can conduct their own defence; they can protect and promote literature and art; they can maintain navies and ocean-trading fleets of their own, and conduct naval battles on equal terms with foreigners. He taught the modern Hindus to rise to the full stature of their growth."

The Maratha power, after Sivaji, quickly lost sight of his ideals. It had always neglected the economic development of the people and endeavoured to maintain a large army by the proceeds of plunder and foreign invasions largely.

**Weakness of the Maratha polity**

"There was no attempt at well-thought-out organised communal improvement, spread of education, or unification of the people, either under Sivaji or under the Peishwas." Gradually communal dissensions made themselves felt in the administration; and the Maratha state began to mani-

fest a reaction in favour of Hindu orthodoxy. These and other features sapped away the inner cohesion and vitality of the Maratha polity in a comparatively short period.\*

### SECTION III. SUCCESSORS OF SIVAJI TO 1708

Sivaji died without mentioning his successor. His eldest son, Sambhaji, was devoid of ability and had even proved treacherous to his father by joining the latter's worst foes. He was practically imprisoned by his father for this at the fort of Panhala; and according to one version the news of his father's death was carefully kept concealed from him for some time.

On the other hand, Sivaji's surviving wife, Soyra Bai, befriended the *Ashta Pradhyn*, formed a strong party in the state and secured the throne for her son, Raja Ram. "The crowning of Raja Ram gave the signal for a division among the Marathas."

Sambhaji showed, in the face of a crisis, unexpected energy and vigour of action. He seized the fort of Panhala, gave all sorts of reckless promises to his adherents and crowned himself at Raigarh. Raja Ram was deposed, but pardoned. But his partisans were imprisoned. One of the worst of Sambhaji's early acts was the treatment he meted out to Soyra Bai. He falsely accused her of having poisoned Sivaji and then threw her in a prison and starved her to death. About this time he wrote a letter to Saint Ramdas, requesting an interview; but the latter refused. Instead, the saint wrote a letter of admonition and exhorted Sambhaji to follow the example of his illustrious father.†

In June 1681, there came to the court of Sambhaji Prince Akbar, a son of Aurangzib, and a fugitive from his father's wrath. His attempted rebellion, as has already been narrated, was a failure, thanks to Aurangzib's resourcefulness. The arrival of Prince Akbar in the Maratha

\* See Sarkar's *Shivaji*, Ch. XVI, Sec. 2. Sardesai's *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, has a valuable chapter on the character and work of Sivaji.

† See for the letter, Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. II, pp. 4-5.

country only revived old discords. The party of Raja Ram wanted to avenge the death of Soyra Bai. They therefore plotted against Sambhaji by resolving to make Akbar the ruler of the greater portion of Maharashtra, reserving for Raja Ram only a small share. But Prince Akbar was high-minded enough to reject the offer of the conspirators; he divulged the plot to Sambhaji. The latter took a fearful vengeance. Many he caused to be trampled under foot by elephants; a large number of the house of Shirke to which the unfortunate Soyra Bai belonged, were hunted down and massacred. This horrible deed drove the discontent deeper and made the position of Sambhaji worse.

Sambhaji wasted the first years of his reign (1681—1689) in a fruitless attempt to take the forts of Janjira and Goa belonging to the foreign settlers. **Blunders of Sambhaji—He attacks foreign settlements** His object was to secure his flank from attack while at war with the Mughals. The huge treasure accumulated by Sivaji was thus wasted. The army was in arrears of pay; and it was therefore permitted to plunder and loot the neighbouring states. In the result, the army could not be kept under restraint. The good name won for his army by Sivaji now passed away. The Mughals soon discovered the sad plight of the Maratha soldiery and inflicted blow upon blow on it. Many officers and nobles deserted to the Mughal side. Conspiracies against the ruler multiplied; and the Maratha power lost prestige.

To complete the tale of inefficiency, Sambhaji, now suspicious of every officer at his court, took as his chief adviser, a Kanauji Brahman, Kavi Kalash. **Advent of Kalash** His advent into the state had a disastrous effect on it. Kalash was both a fool and an incapable stranger; and he was hated by all. He advised Sambhaji to give up his foreign conquests. "A kingdom," he said, "should be like the jewel in a ring, at all times wholly visible to its owner's eye."

During the period of the great Mughal offensive, Sambhaji, instead of acting vigorously either for himself or in concert with Bijapur and Golconda as his father had done, wasted his time in the company of Kalash and the women his favourite supplied him with. At times he shook off his stupor; but his attention was diverted to the old scheme of subduing Goa. Prince Akbar also got tired of the Marathas and in utter disgust took himself off to Persia. In the meantime, Aurangzib had annexed both Bijapur and Golconda and was on the hunt for Sambhaji. The latter was resting at Sangameshwar in the company of his evil genius, Kalash. The Mughals discovered his hiding place (January, 1689) and at once captured him in a sudden assault. When urged by his faithful followers to mount his horse and escape to a place of safety, the drunken Sambhaji could only say: "Kalash is a magician and he will by his magic destroy our enemies."

Taken as prisoner, along with his vicious minister, before the Emperor, Sambhaji was stung with shame and remorse and desired only death. So he became scurrilous and abused the Emperor and his religion in the foulest terms possible. Even then Aurangzib, on the advice of his nobles, wanted to spare the life of the king of the Marathas, should he embrace the Muslim faith. "Tell the Emperor," said Sambhaji, "that if he will give me his daughter, I will become a Mussalman." Arrogant words indeed! Aurangzib ordered 'a red hot iron to be drawn across his eyes, his tongue to be cut out, and his head to be severed from his body.' This was correctly done. Sambhaji's minister, Kalash, was shown more mercy. He was executed in the usual fashion. The ladies of Sambhaji's family and his young son, Sahu, were taken captive soon afterwards, but treated with every respect.

By this cruel punishment, Aurangzib hoped to overawe the Marathas. He was mistaken. On the other hand, in the hour of their national shame and humiliation, the

Marathas forgo the follies and vices of Sambhaji, regarded him as a martyr and kept alive the flame of anger and resentment against the Mughals. The Maratha spirit roused leaders met at Raigarh and resolved to acknowledge Sivaji, the son of Sambhaji, as king, with Raja Ram, his uncle, as regent. Strict discipline was once again introduced in the army. Forts and fortifications were repaired and provisions gathered on a large scale. A new wave of enthusiasm passed over Maharashtra. Every Maratha captain now fought and plundered on his own account; and the Marathas became "the one dominating factor of Deccan politics, and an enemy all pervasive throughout the Indian Peninsula, elusive as the wind, the ally and the rallying point of all the enemies of the Delhi empire and all disturbers of public peace and regular administration throughout the Deccan and even in Malwa, Gondwana and Bundelkhand." \*

The new army of Raja Ram bestirred itself. It did many deeds of daring, including a brilliant raid into the Emperor's camp. Their successes, though small, restored the prestige of the Marathas and indirectly helped to foster the union of roving bands of soldiers. In the meanwhile, Aurangzib did not remain idle. He was resolved to take the fort of Raigarh. He therefore sent a large force under Itikad Khan, a trustworthy general. It was a traitor Suryaji Pisal, that opened the gates of this fortress. Sambhaji's widow, Yesubai, and her son, Sivaji, were taken prisoners to Delhi. They were, however, kindly treated by Aurangzib's daughter, Zinat-un-nissa, who had a strange affection for the young Maratha prince. The aged Emperor himself exhibited an unwonted love for Sivaji whom he named, rather nicknamed, Sahu (*lit.* the good one).

The fall of Raigarh (October, 1689) was followed by the capture of fort after fort in the Konkan. Raja Ram and his followers resolved to quit the country, finding the situation hopeless. Disguised as Lingayat pilgrims they reached Bangalore, not without

\* See page 290 of *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV (1937).

adventures.\* From Bangalore, Raja Ram proceeded to Jinji which he made the head-quarters of the state (April 1690).

At Jinji Raja Ram re-organized the Maratha administration. The administrative arrangements of Sivaji were restored. A new *Ashta-Pradhan* (or state reorganised at Jinji Council of Eight) was constituted. He also created a new office called *Pratinidhi* or king's representative (deputy) which was given to a loyal officer, *Prahlad Niraji*. Helped by a set of exceptionally loyal and trustworthy officers, *Santaji Ghorpade*, *Dhanaji Jadav* and *Ramachandra Bavdekar*, Raja Ram formed a new army, out of the old veterans of Sivaji who had now taken to free-booting on their own account, which proved to be the terror of the Mughals. At the suggestion of *Yesubai*, now a captive in the Imperial camp, he crowned himself king, pending the arrival of *Sahu*. The Marathas overran the country and stopped the supply of food to the Mughal forces.

Aurangzib resolved to invest the new Maratha capital, Jinji. A huge army under *Zulfikar Khan* was despatched to Jinji. But the Mughal general was as corrupt as he was incapable of taking the fort. He even came to a secret understanding with the garrison at Jinji. This enabled Raja Ram to despatch forces to the Deccan and Konkan to recover lost forts. "He distributed among his nobles large grants of land formerly occupied by Sivaji, but now in possession of the Emperor. These grants encouraged the Maratha leaders to equip troops at their own expenses and with them to establish strong places in the midst of Mughal possessions." † In 1692 the Marathas re-took *Raigarh* and *Panhala*. Other forts were taken in due course. Let us now advert to the siege of Jinji.

\* See Kincaid and Parasnis : *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. II, pp. 72-74, for an account of this stirring episode.

† Kincaid and Parasnis : *History of the Maratha People*, Vol. II,



This siege lasted from 1690 to 1698. Zulfikar Khan effected nothing in the years 1691-92 and merely made a show of siege operations. Kambaksh, the youngest and favourite son of the Emperor, opened a secret correspondence with Raja Ram and planned to fly to him and then to seize the throne of Delhi with Maratha aid. The plot miscarried and the Prince was sent back under disgrace to his father. In 1694 Zulfikar Khan resumed active operations. But he feared the imminent death of the Emperor and a consequent civil war and mostly stood on the defensive in the years 1695-96. At last, when the Marathas were weakened by internal dissensions, and the Emperor pressed for vigorous action, Zulfikar had to take Jinji by assault (Jany. 1698) "in order to save his credit with the Emperor." He had, however, sent timely warning to Raja Ram who escaped to Vellore and ultimately reached Maharashtra in safety. The Mughal commanders were frequently changed during the operations. The Maratha horsemen systematically plundered and robbed the Mughal camp. Though Jinji fell to the Mughals in 1698, it had drained the resources of the Empire. The Mughal arms had sustained serious reverses. Raja Ram himself escaped before the fall of the fort.

It was to Satara that Raja Ram fled. From there he continued to guide the operations of his generals. His object now was to wear out the Mughal forces besieging the Deccan fortresses and at the same time to invade the more northern portion of the empire. Indeed this was the beginning of the Maratha counter-offensive. A huge army of sixty thousand men was divided into three sections under the leadership of Dhanaji Jadav, Parashuram, Trimbak and Shankar Narayan.

In 1699 Raja Ram himself took the field and moved towards the Godavari valley. At Pandharpur the Mughals were defeated, while another Maratha force cleared them out of the Poona district. All through the route *chaauth*

and *sardeshmukhi* were collected. Thence the Marathas directed their march towards Khandesh and Berar. In these districts not only were the usual taxes levied, but every arrangement was made for the proper administration of the areas. Raja Ram appointed Khande Rao to look after Gujarat, while Parsoji Bhonsle was made governor of Berar. In these arrangements we have the beginnings of the great Maratha dynasties of Baroda and Nagpur.

Aurangzib in the meanwhile was carrying out methodically his dull programme of capturing Maratha forts either deserted or of no great value. He now concentrated all his resources in Maharashtra. In October 1699 he took a large fort between the Krishna and Koyna rivers, *viz.*, Vasantgad. Then he turned suddenly against Satara itself.—The siege of

The great  
Mughal offensive  
—treachery of  
Azam Shah—fall  
of Satara

this important fortress commanded by Parashuram Trimbak lasted for six months. So overwhelming in numbers was the besieging army that, but for the treachery of the Emperor's own son Azam

Shah who secretly permitted provisions to be taken in, the fort would have fallen within two months. The fort fell in

Death of Raja  
Ram (1700)

1700. In the same year Raja Ram died, worn out with incessant warfare. From his death-bed Raja Ram exhorted the Mara-

thas to carry on war with the Mughals till Sahu should be liberated and the Mughals driven out of Maharashtra.

Raja Ram left two sons; the elder, Sivaji, was born to his wife, Tara Bai, while the younger named Sambhaji was

The succession  
dispute

through Rajas Bai. On the receipt of news of her husband's death, Tara Bai immediately summoned the ministerial

council and pressed the claims of her own son, Sivaji, to succeed Raja Ram. There was a party that was in favour of acknowledging Sahu as the legal heir. A small faction urged the enthronement of Sambhaji, the second son. These internal dissensions, threatened to weaken the Maratha state. In the end, after a hard struggle, Tara Bai gained the throne for her son with herself as regent for her son, who was but ten years old.

Tara Bui became thus the *de facto* ruler of the state. She managed it splendidly and carried on the war with the Mughals with astonishing vigour and thoroughness. "Her administrative genius and strength of character saved the nation in the awful crisis that threatened it in consequence of Raja Ram's death, the disputed succession to the throne, and Aurangzib's unbroken victories from 1699 to 1701."\* She lived the life of a common soldier, taking her son in hand, she marched from camp to camp, encouraging, flattering and cajoling the rank and file of the army. Khafi Khan, the Muslim historian, had to admit that, due to her energy and skill, "all the efforts of Aurangzib against the Marathas down to the end of his reign failed."

Between 1702 and 1707 Tara Bui and her generals were able to capture most of the forts in the Konkan. *Chauth* was collected from Surat and Burhanpur. In 1705 a huge Maratha force crossed the Narmada in two large divisions and ravaged Malwa, Khandesh and Berar were overrun. Fifteen thousand Marathas broke into Gujarat and defeated the imperial forces. Singarh and Raigarh were again taken possession of by the Marathas. The Marathas became the masters of the situation all over the Deccan and reduced the Mughals to a helpless defensive. These losses almost broke the heart of Aurangzib and increased the malady from which he was suffering. He had failed miserably in suppressing the Marathas. He died in 1707.

The death of the Emperor was followed by a war of succession as was always the case with the Mughals. Tara Bai utilised that opportunity to the full by invading the imperial dominions and capturing more forts. The war for the Mughal throne ended in favour of Shah Alam, who assumed the title of Bahadur Shah. Acting on the advice of Zulfikar Khan, the viceroy of the Deccan, the new Emperor liberated Sahu from his custody in the hope that his entry into M. ratha

Tara Bai, widow  
of Raja Ram,  
and Sivaji III

Successes of  
Tara Bai

Sahu released

politics would create discord among their leaders. Zulfiqar Khan was right; and the return of Sahu threw an apple of discord into the Maratha camp. A national party in the Maratha country supported Sahu, while Tara Bai and her adherents continued to fight for her son. This civil war gave the much-longed-for respite to the Mughal government. Sahu was given by the Emperor the customary dues of *chauth* and *sirdeshmukhi* in the six Deccan provinces of the Mughals, as a grant from the Emperor. He formed his *Ashtapradhan* and was crowned at Satara in January 1708, as *Chhatrapati*.

Notwithstanding the great services rendered by Tara Bai to the Maratha state, many of its noblemen supported Sahu, who was crowned king in 1708 at Satara. Tara Bai continued the struggle till her son's (Sivaji III) death in 1712. Her adherents afterwards set up a rival king in the person of Raja Ram's second son, Sambhaji. In the end, however, Sahu triumphed.

Sahu was brought up in the imperial harem by Aurangzib's daughter. He was entirely out of touch with Maratha politics. When he returned to his native land, the country was rife with civil war. A condition of anarchy existed. He, however, won the love of many by his personal charm and kindness. He had not the gifts of Sivaji the Great or Raja Ram; but he had enough common sense. He understood the temper of the nation. He thought it wise to leave the administration in the hands of those who knew it much better than himself. His generous nature won for him many friends; but his indolence and love of ease unfitted him to rule a sturdy people like the Marathas. But in the first years of his rule very few of the great Maratha nobles espoused his cause; and the *Senapati*, Chandra Sen, the son of Dhanaji Jadhav, openly went over to the rival's side which was strongly supported by the new Deccan viceroy, Chin Qilich Khan, afterwards famous as the Nizamu'l-Mulk.

In the early days of Sahu's career, a Konkana Brahman, Balaji Visvanath, greatly distinguished himself in the service of the state. He had quarrelled with Chandra Sen and fled to Sahu for protection. He made himself invaluable to his protector and rose rapidly in his favour. He was now made Peishwa, *i.e.*, prime minister. Balaji possessed all the cunning and statecraft of a typical Maratha Brahman. He reduced the authority of Sahu to a shadow and became the *de facto* ruler of the state; but he always kept up a deferential and loyal attitude towards the king. He also contrived to make his office hereditary in his family. With him the rule of the Peishwas began (1714).

Rise of Balaji  
Visvanath, the  
first Peishwa

## CHAPTER XVII

### EARLY EUROPEAN COMMERCE WITH INDIA— THE PORTUGUESE: THEIR RISE AND FALL

#### SECTION I. EARLY TRADE AND TRADE-ROUTES

As noted in an earlier part of the book, there were some articles of general exportation from India which were in great demand in Europe even in early times, *viz.*, spices and aromatics, precious stones and pearls and silks and muslins. Articles of luxury had been imported from the east into the Mediterranean countries from the times of Solomon. The Roman Empire consumed Indian spices and other fragrant substances in great quantities; while pearls, silks\* and muslins from the east were in equally great demand by the nobles of Rome. There were other commodities of export from India like onyx-stones, ivory, cotton fabrics of various colours, indigo, skins and tortoise-shell. The main imports into India from the Roman Empire were gold and silver coins, large quantities of which have been recently unearthed in different parts of South India, wine, coral, glass vessels of different kinds, brass, tin, lead, etc. India received very little of foreign manufactures or products in exchange for her own commodities, unlike as now; and it was mostly with gold and silver† that Europe purchased the luxuries of the east.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Saracens conquered Egypt and Persia; and they continued to carry on the trade with India both by way of the Persian Gulf and by the Red Sea.

\* Though silk was only produced in China, silk goods were exported to Europe mainly from the different ports of India. Under the Emperor Aurelian, they were valued very highly. The real nature of silk and the manner of its production were known to Europe only in the sixth century A.D. See W. Robertson: *An Historical Disquisition on the Trade with India* (1791) (Calcutta reprint of 1904), pp. 43-45.

† South India imported Roman specie wholesale; and the Roman coins found in the country tell their own tale. See R. Sewell: *Roman Coins found in India* (*J.R.A.S.*, 1904, p. 591). See also H. G. Rawlinson: *Intercourse between India and the Western World* (1916), Chaps. VI and VII; and E. H. Warming on: *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (1928)—p. 280 *et seq.*

From the eighth century onwards\* a taste for the luxuries of the east began to spread among the cities of

Italy and also among the people of  
**The importance of spices to Europe** Marseilles and other towns of France.

It was with pepper and other spices that the Europeans salted the meat which they had to keep for months all through their long winter. "In their cookery, all dishes were highly seasoned with them. In every entertainment of parade a profusion of them was deemed essential to magnificence. In every medical prescription they were the principal ingredients".

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the cities of Venice and Genoa monopolised all the trade of the Mediterranean and particularly of the city of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire, with the East. They got cloves, nutmegs, pearls, gems and other valuable articles by caravans passing from the head of the Persian Gulf through Mesopotamia and Syria; and they got the more bulky goods like pepper, cinnamon and ginger, by ships sailing across the Arabian and the Red

**The supply of these goods** Seas to the Egyptian coast. The supply of the more valuable and rarer goods was often scanty and uncertain, owing to the difficulty and expense of a long caravan journey. But the goods coming by sea could always be got in large and continuous quantities and hence were sold at moderate prices.

There were three main lines of trade from India and the neighbouring countries to the Mediterranean coast from early times; and whichever monarch or nation controlled the Mediterranean outlets of these routes enjoyed all the

\* One effect of the Crusades (wars of religion) between the Saracen Muhammadan lords of the Holy Land and the Christian expeditions that went to take possession of it from the eleventh century onwards, was to stimulate the progress of the eastern trade, the profits accruing from which aroused European interest in travels and adventures. Thus many Europeans were tempted to undertake long journeys of discovery and adventure, like the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, and several Catholic priests who travelled to China and other distant lands. From the time of the Crusades, eastern fruits, spices, rugs, etc., were rendered familiar in Europe; and refined life in some respects may be said to have commenced after the West came in contact with the East during the Crusades.

profits accruing from this rich trade. The most northern

**Three main  
routes of trade**

of these routes started from the Indus valley and its neighbourhood ; it then crossed the Afghan and Hindu Kush

ranges till it reached the Oxus ; then running along its course to its mouth, it crossed the Aral

**(1) The northern  
or the Black Sea  
route**

and Caspian Seas to Caucasia where it ascended the river Cyrus (Kur) and then descended along the river Phasis

into the Euxine (Black Sea). Or it ran along the tableland of Northern Persia and the fringes of Armenia and reached

either Trebizond on the southern shore of the Black Sea, or struck through the Mesopotamian desert into Syria. This route was very long and tedious to traverse\* ; but its great

geographical importance lay in the fact that it connected China (i.e., Chinese Turkestan), directly with Europe. From the Black Sea outlets of this route, goods were transported

**Its European  
outlets**

to Constantinople and from thence to the ports of Italy or carried up the Danube and other rivers in its neighbour-

hood into Central Europe and Germany and finally to the towns on the Baltic and North Sea coasts.

The trade along this route formed the chief source of wealth to the Byzantine Empire for a long time, particularly

**Constantinople,  
Venice and  
Genoa ; and the  
Hanseatic  
League**

after the Saracens got possession of Syria and Egypt. Constantinople was the most important emporium on this route and was the chief supplier of goods to the great Italian ports of Venice and Genoa.

Venice had numerous trading-stations and factories from the Adriatic to the Bosphorus ; it tried to monopolise all the trade coming by way of Constantinople ; but it had to encounter, from the thirteenth century, the

\* "The difficulties of the Central Asia routes to the Black Sea, with their deadly camel journey of alternate snows and torrid wastes, rendered them available only for articles of small bulk. They never attained the importance to India, which the two southern trade-routes, by the Syrian caravan track and by the sea passage to Egypt, acquired. They formed, however, ancient paths between Europe and China and received prominence from the blocking of the Syrian route in ancient times."—W. W. Hunter: *A History of British India*, Vol. I, p. 33.



serious rivalry of Pisa and Genoa, especially the latter which planted fortified factories along the southern and western coasts of the Black Sea. Owing to the growing rivalry of Venice and Genoa, the towns of North Germany, which had united for the purposes of foreign trade into a league known as the Hanseatic League, opened direct trade with Constantinople and established a chain of commercial stations stretching from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea and the German Ocean. The towns of this League greatly profited by their trade in eastern goods. When the trade through the Black Sea route was choked up after the Turkish occupation of Constantinople, the prosperity of this League also rapidly declined. The gradual closing of the Turks upon the Byzantine Empire and their final occupation of Constantinople in 1453, as well as their previous occupation of all the Black Sea ports including those in the Crimea, blocked completely the northern route once and for all.

The Indo-Syrian route ran from the mouth of the Tigris and the Euphrates through Mesopotamia  
 (2) The Indo-Syrian Route and the Syrian Desert to Damascus and thence on either to the Levantine coast or to Egypt. At the dawn of history, trade along this route was in the hands of the merchants of Chaldea and Babylonia who carried the goods to the Mediterranean from whence Phœnician mariners distributed them to all parts of the Mediterranean world. The Jewish kings, David and Solomon, who ruled over Judæa in the eleventh century B.C., strengthened their hold over the Mediterranean outlets of this route; and some of the articles with which Solomon adorned his capital, Jerusalem, like his ivory-throne, the sandal-wood pillars of his palace, the apes and peacocks of his pleasure-garden, were probably Indian in origin.

This route later came into the hands of the Medo-Persian Empire and of the Romans after their conquest of Syria in the first century B.C. It was  
 Successive masters of this route very useful to the Romans, for it supplied them with a large portion of the eastern luxuries and spices which they consumed. About the middle of the seventh century A.D.,

the Arabs, followers of Islam, got possession of all the regions from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean; and they carefully fostered trade along this route and founded the port of Bussorah (Basra) near the head of the Persian Gulf; and it became the headquarters of their eastern trade. Arab geographers mapped the course from the Persian Gulf to China into seven seas, each being given a name of its own.

The Crusades which were fought mainly in Syria and Palestine, blocked from time to time the caravan lines of this route, but they did not completely stop the trade; and they rendered the Crusaders familiar with eastern commodities. The Christian kingdom of Jerusalem established by the Crusaders in 1099, also encouraged trade through this route.

The irruption of rude Mongol tribes in the thirteenth century into Mesopotamia where they broke the power of the Caliphs, was followed by the invasions of the Osmanli Turks who penetrated in the fourteenth century into Syria and Asia Minor and by 1400 occupied all the country as far as Smyrna. They blocked completely the trade along the Indo-Syrian route and greatly injured the eastern Mediterranean cities.

The third important route was the Indo-Egyptian or Southern route. It was, for the greater part of its course, a maritime route. It led from the

(3) The Indo-Egyptian route

Indian ports of the Malabar and Bombay coasts to the mouth of the Red Sea and thence on to the Egyptian coast from where goods were carried by caravans to boats on the Nile. The great port of Alexandria at the western mouth of the Nile, which was founded by Alexander the Great, was the chief Mediterranean outlet of this route. Ibn Batuta mentions Alexandria as one of the five chief ports that he had seen. Both the independent Egyptian kings who preceded the Greek conquest of Egypt, and the Greek dynasty of the Ptolemies who ruled the Nile valley for three hundred years till it was conquered by Rome (cir. 30 B.C.) encouraged trade along this route and made several attempts to cut

a navigable canal from the Red Sea to the Nile so that the difficult caravan journey across the Egyptian desert might be avoided.\*

The Roman Empire, which converted Egypt into a province in 30 B.C., suppressed piracy and made navigation secure both in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea. About 45 A.D., a navigator, by name Hippalus, discovered the existence of the periodical monsoon-winds blowing across the Indian Ocean. After this discovery, it was not necessary for trading vessels to creep along the coast as they did before: they could now sail with the monsoon from the mouth of the Red Sea directly across the Arabian Sea and reach the Malabar coast in a few weeks; and the return voyage was made with equal facility with the deflected monsoon winds. This monsoon-route became the chief channel for the bulkier produce as well as for the precious gems and wares of India, enriched the ports along its line and made Alexandria the commercial metropolis of the Roman Empire.†

The anonymous work known as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (cir. 90 A.D.) and the account of Cosmas, a Christian monk of the sixth century A.D., who travelled down the Red Sea to India, give us much information about the trade of the Malabar coast and Ceylon which followed this route. Ceylon became famous as the meeting place of the merchants of the east and the west. Cosmas mentions China and even indicates roughly its geographical position. After the Arabs conquered Egypt in 640-641 A.D., the trade of Alexandria passed into their hands; and, as we saw, they controlled the Indo-Syrian route also. Alexandria was closed to European traders; and all the carrying trade from India to the Levant was done by the Arabs, while the Europeans were allowed only to distribute the cargoes in Europe.

\* From the twentieth century B.C. up to the last century numerous attempts were made by Egyptian rulers to connect the Red Sea with the Nile or the Mediterranean. But it was left to M. de Lesseps, a French engineer, to actually accomplish the task and cut a canal across the Isthmus of Suez (1866).

† W. W. Hunter: *History of British India*, Vol. I, p. 42.

The Arabs, first under the Fatimite Caliphs and later under the Mamluk Sultans, remained the ruling race in Egypt till the beginning of the sixteenth century when they were superseded by the Ottoman Turks. Under Arab rule, the Indo-Egyptian trade continued to flourish and even gained in importance when the Syrian route was blocked at times. Arab traders\* explored all the seas between Egypt and China; and colonies of Arab merchants settled in various parts in the west coast of India. The accounts of Arab geographers of the middle age are very valuable for a picture of this trade.

The Ottoman Turks, after they conquered Egypt, completely blocked the Mediterranean outlets of this trade. After Egypt settled down under their rule, trade revived partially. Under Turkish occupation, Constantinople ceased to be the large market for eastern goods that it was; and with the decay of its trade, Venice and Genoa declined as well. The Turkish closure of Egypt, Syria and Constantinople to Europeans led to a scarcity of Asiatic goods in Europe and to a consequent enhancement of their prices. While the Turkish navy swept the Adriatic and ravaged the Italian coast, the Barbary Corsairs of North Africa outflanked the Venetians and the Genoese in the Western Mediterranean; and these "as a political factor formed the maritime counterpart of the Turkish conquests by land." The rise of the Ottoman Turks as a land-power obstructed European access to the Mediterranean outlets of the Indo-Syrian and the Black Sea routes; and their sea-power in the Eastern Mediterranean blocked the outlets of the Indo-Egyptian trade. These obstructions affected not only Venice and Genoa, but the whole system of European commerce and the Hanseatic League as well. The spirit of

\* Ibn Batuta, the famous Moorish traveller (1304-77 A.D.), was acquainted with all the ports and seas from Alexandria to Sumatra and his account is interesting "as exhibiting the wide extent of the Arab commercial intercourse with the East, prior to its partial demolition by the growth of the Ottoman power and its final destruction by the Portuguese discovery of a sea-route to India."

European maritime enterprise\* was thus roused to the discovery of new routes to the East which would be independent of the Mediterranean. When the Portuguese discovered the Cape of Good Hope and began to divert to that route all the trade with the East, the Turks tried, strenuously and furiously, to combine with the injured

Moorish traders of the Indian Ocean to put down the Portuguese. All their attempts, however, proved futile. Trade along the old routes, and particularly along the Indo-Egyptian route, languished. It is only with the opening of the Suez Canal that trade through Egypt and the Red Sea has revived.

## SECTION II. THE PORTUGUESE TRADE AND DOMINION

On account of its situation, Portugal was the natural outpost of Christendom against the Moors of Northern

Africa as was the Byzantine Empire in Eastern Europe against the Turks. It has a number of deep and sheltered

harbours and its mariners early developed a taste for adventure and travel. Portugal had freed itself from the control of Castile (Spain) as early as 1385 and had taken a vigorous part in the long struggle to expel the Moors from the Spanish peninsula. The old crusading zeal which the Portuguese had developed in their struggles with the Moors was a chief motive-power for all their discoveries and conquests in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Their sense of new-born national independence was a further stimulus to their spirit of enterprise.

The Portuguese sailors, under the guidance of the famous Prince Henry the Navigator, explored the coast of

North-West Africa and captured all the trade of that region which was hitherto in the hands of the Moors. They made their discoveries go hand-in-hand with commerce and

\* Maritime discovery heralded by Vasco da Gama and Columbus was a cause of the Renaissance becoming so comprehensive. "The discovery of the Cape route to the East threw open to European observation vast tracts of countries and an immense number of societies of men whose fame had come down through Pliny and Ptolemy, but whom no one but a few traders and missionaries had

colonisation. The Portuguese naval academy at Sagres taught the proper use of the magnet by the sailors; and soon Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands became the stepping-stones of further African exploration to the Guinea Coast. Prince Henry died in 1460; but his work was continued by King Alfonso. Within twenty years after the death of Prince Henry, the Portuguese ships had passed the Gulf of Guinea and the mouth of the Niger; and by 1487 they had passed the mouth of the Congo and reached Cape Cross under the command of a bold sailor, Cao, by name.

Bartholomew Dias, the successor of Cao, was the last of the great Portuguese sea-men who prepared the way for Vasco da Gama. In 1487 he rounded  
 Dias and Vasco da Gama the Cape of Good Hope with great difficulty, but had to turn back owing to the obstinate refusal of the crew to sail further on. Portuguese enterprise was a matter of admiration for Columbus. The Portuguese were the pioneers of the factory system; and their factory at Guinea was imitated by other European colonising nations. They were also the first to establish tropical plantations worked by slave labour. Meanwhile the Portuguese king made an attempt to find a route to India by way of Egypt, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. He sent one Pedro Covilham who reached the Malabar Coast by way of the Red Sea and reported the knowledge that he had gathered about the north-eastern coast of Africa and about Madagascar. Covilham definitely advised the Portuguese that "their ships which sailed down the coast of Guinea, might be sure of reaching the termination of the continent, by persisting in a course to the south; and when they should arrive in the Eastern Ocean their best direction must be to inquire for Sofala and the Island of the Moon (*i.e.*, Madagascar)."

"Columbus' voyage was an integral part of the process of Atlantic exploration initiated by Prince Henry the visited in person, since the Arab and the Turk tore the East and West asunder and began to keep them so."—P. 13 of J. L. Myres's *The Influence of Anthropology on the Course of Political Science* (Univ. of California).

Navigator. Columbus' knowledge of Atlantic winds and tides had been mostly acquired on Portuguese ships."\*

Dias had forced the sea-gates of the Orient. It was left to Vasco da Gama to enter them. He was chosen by

the Portuguese king for the great India

~The first voyage of Vasco da Gama (1497-99) voyage in the summer of 1497. After a momentous voyage in which he sailed across the Atlantic to within 600 miles of South America, he reached the Cape of Good Hope, and then rounded it. After passing along Natal and the Delagoa Bay, he reached Mozambique in March, 1498. Now the Portuguese had left the land of the Hottentots and other Negroes and entered into the region where Moslem Arab traders had founded settlements. All along the coast from Sofala to Zanzibar, the Moslems controlled the trade in ivory and gold which were got in the interior. At Mombasa, a little to the north of Zanzibar, Vasco da Gama got the help of a Gujarati pilot, sailed across the Arabian Sea and finally reached Calicut (May, 1498). He did not stay long at Calicut, and he set sail for Portugal which he reached in the latter part of 1499. Portugal thus became the mistress of the sea-route to India.†

\* Jayne: *Vasco da Gama and his Successors*, p. 51.

† One result of the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco da Gama was the partition of the unexplored world between Spain and Portugal by a Papal Bull (edict issued by the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church) in 1494. A treaty to this effect was signed by Spain and Portugal and was further confirmed by the Pope in 1505. According to this, the boundary line between the two spheres of influence was drawn due north and south of a point, 376 leagues west of Cape Verde, the East and Africa being assigned to Portugal and the West to Spain. By the efforts of bold men like Balboa who discovered the Pacific Ocean from the Isthmus of Panama and Magellan who rounded South America and passed through the straits which bear his name into the Pacific Ocean (1519), and thence on to the Eastern Archipelago, the Spaniards succeeded in opening a lawful route to the Eastern Seas by the West and the Pacific Ocean. Magellan was the first who circumnavigated the world. It was usual in those days for European states to accept the decisions of the Pope in all matters of common concern. The English would not for long infringe the monopoly of Spain and Portugal and devoted all their energies from the time of Henry VII onwards, towards the discovery of another route to India, outside the Cape of Good Hope and the Magellan routes, and sought to find out a passage either by the north-east or by the north-west.

The Papal division of Asia and America between Portugal and Spain

The Portuguese landing in India was "fortunate both as to place and time." The Malabar Coast which was the

The Portuguese  
landing  
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as to place  
and time

scene of their early activities was divided among petty rulers like the Zamorin of Calicut and the Raja of Cochin who were too weak to resist the armed ships of the Portuguese. The Zamorin was

very tolerant towards all Muhamudans and was noted for the security and justice that he offered to the merchants. Besides, these rulers at first gave a welcome to the Portuguese merchants, even as they had welcomed the Arab traders before them, since the bulk of their revenue was derived from their sea-trade. The Malabar Coast was greatly suited for Indo-European commerce, as it was a half-way house between the rich spice-producing regions of Ceylon, Malacca and the Spice Islands on the one hand, and the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the ports of East Africa on the other. The empire of Vijayanagar controlled

The political  
situation in  
South  
India and the  
Deccan

all South India to the south of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers and also the ports of Bhatkal and Honowar on the Canara coast; but it had no leisure to interfere in the affairs of the

Malabar Coast: and the Portuguese soon saw that their true interests would be best served by peaceful commerce and friendship with Vijayanagar. The Bahmani Empire was at that time torn by internecine strife caused by religious dissensions between Shia and Sunni and by the constant quarrels between the Deccani or native nobles and the foreign adventurers and soldiers in the royal service. The strength of the Bahmani Sultans was frittered away in their wars with the Muhammadan rulers of Gujarat and Khandesh and Malwa on the north and their never-ending struggle with Vijayanagar on the south. The disintegration of this kingdom which began in 1489 was complete by 1525. Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Berar and Golconda, four out of the five principalities into which it broke up, had not much to do with the west coast which was the main

It is thus that the Portuguese and the Spaniards regarded all Asia and America as peculiarly their own and condemned as pirates all sailors of other nations which interfered with their own monopoly.



scene of Portuguese activities. Bijapur which ruled over the neighbourhood of Goa, could not prevent the aggressions of the Portuguese on the coast, because it lacked an efficient navy to cope with the Portuguese fleet and was much distracted by the disastrous wars with Vijayanagar. Moreover the Portuguese allied themselves with the powerful pirate chiefs on the coast like Timoja and with the Hindu rulers of the ports of Honowar, Bankapur and Bhatkal, all of whom were feudatories of Vijayanagar.

Even in Northern India the kingdom of Delhi then under the Lodi dynasty, was not very strong, and Gujarat, Malwa and Bengal were independent Muhammadan kingdoms; and it was only some decades after the rise of the Portuguese power that Babar and Akbar built up the strong Mughal Empire out of the old Indo-Moslem states. Gujarat was the only formidable power which the Portuguese had to encounter; and even that state was unable to oppose seriously the power of the Portuguese, without the outside help of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Thus there was no power either in the north or in the south of India which could effectively bar the advance of the Portuguese.\*

Calicut, which was the place of the first landing of the Portuguese, was a very prosperous port.† The Zamorin treated all the traders of different nationalities alike and saw that they suffered no trouble at all. The testimony of numerous travellers ranks the Zamorin as a very humane and just ruler who tolerated all religions and ensured the safety of all who came into his territories. But he was an enemy of the Raja of Cochin which was also a great trading place and through which most of the

At the time of Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut "the old order of things alike in Northern and Southern India was passing away; the new order had not yet emerged."—*History of British India*, by W. W. Hunter, Vol. I, p. 163.

It was described by Abdur Razzak, a Persian, who visited it in 1442 as a place where security and justice were firmly established. See R. H. Major: *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hak. Society) (1857), p. 14. Lu ovico Varthema who visited it in 1505 and wrote for his Portuguese patrons, praised the uprightness of its judges and merchants.

pepper grown in the Malabar Coast had to pass. Other ports like Quilon, Cranganore (ancient Muziris) and Cannanore carried on a brisk trade, chiefly in pepper and ginger.

Vasco da Gama, during his voyage out to India, had come into contact with the Arab merchants of the East African ports who traded largely with India, Persia and Arabia. He excited their suspicion and jealousy which were quickly communicated to the Arab and Moplah traders of the Malabar coast. At Calicut he encountered violent and open opposition from them and was secured from molestation only by the armed guards of the Zamorin. He had succeeded in the quest for spices and made Portugal the mistress of the sea-route to India.

A second Portuguese expedition was fitted out in 1500 A.D. under Alvarez Cabral who, on reaching Calicut, openly quarrelled with the Moors, as the Moslem merchants were called, and retaliated by bombarding the place and setting fire to its wooden houses. Cabral then sailed away to Cochin and Cannanore with whose rulers he entered into friendship. From this time the Portuguese and the Arab merchants fully realised that the struggle between them was one of life and death, involving the loss of all chances of trade in the Indian Ocean. An expedition was fitted out under Vasco da Gama in 1502 to destroy the Arab trade of Calicut, root and branch. It threatened the chiefs of Mozambique and Kilwa on the African coast into submission, bombarded Calicut, strengthened the Portuguese factories already established at Cochin and Cannanore and left a squadron of ships to patrol the Malabar coast. Vasco da Gama now put forward a definite claim to Portuguese dominion over the Indian coast and the Arabian Sea and began an open war of extermination against the Mussalman traders against whom the Raja of Cochin, now an ally of the Portuguese, definitely held out till he was relieved by the next Portuguese expedition of 1503.

The defence of Cochin by a handful of Portuguese soldiers under Duarte Pacheco against the whole force of the Zamorin in 1504 was one of the most brilliant feats of Portuguese arms in the East. It showed the superiority of

Further successes of the Portuguese

Portuguese artillery in naval warfare over the fleets of the Arabs and the Indian powers; and it also showed very clearly that they could very well main-

tain their power by supporting one Indian ruler as against another and they could strengthen their own small numbers with Indian troops disciplined under their own command. The Portuguese leaders, Duarte Pacheco and Lopo Soares, destroyed the enemy ports of Quilon, Calicut and Cranganore and completely blocked the trade of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea with the Malabar coast.

By this time (*i.e.*, 1503-5), the Portuguese had built several factories, fortified them and completely destroyed

Their achievements in the first stage—1488-1505

Arab influence in the Malabar coast. But still they lacked order and system and a definite base for further expansion; and their isolated factories were in danger if

the seasonal winds should prevent navigation and if their squadron in the Indian Ocean should disappear or be engaged in other things; and it was Francisco de Almeida that remedied these defects and supplied the necessary momentum of growth and strength. He was appointed Viceroy of India with full power to wage war, conclude treaties and regulate commerce; and east of the Cape of Good Hope his word was law wherever the Portuguese flag flew.

Almeida, the first Viceroy of the Portuguese in the East, made it his fixed object to secure the control of the African

Francisco de Almeida, Viceroy (1505-09)—his aims

coast, to subdue the remaining Malabar ports at which the Moors still struggled and to strengthen the Portuguese factories. He wanted to divert the whole

export trade of India and East Africa to the Cape route and thus secure for Portugal the monopoly over the trade of the Indian Ocean. He regarded maritime power as a means to commercial supremacy and had no crusading ideals or missionary zeal unlike other Portuguese leaders; and he knew

that he would have to defeat the powerful navies of Turkey and Egypt before he could achieve his ideals. His government was based on sea-power; he avoided annexation of territory as far as possible and did not build fortresses more than was necessary. His plan was to drive the Muhammadan traders from the Indian Ocean and divert the Indian export-trade to the Cape route. He aimed firmly to secure the base of the East African coast, then coerce the Malabar ports and finally to break the Muslim dominance at sea.

Almeida easily subdued the East African ports of Kilwa, Mombasa and Melinde; he attacked the port of

**His achievements** Honowar, allied himself with the Hindu corsair, Timoja, built a fort at Cannanore and conciliated the ruler of Vijayanagar.\*

He sent out his son to explore Ceylon and to block the sea-route to the Maldives which were now taken by the Arabs in order to avoid going near the Malabar coast. The Zamorin was thoroughly humbled in 1506, and Portuguese influence was made supreme in all the Malabar ports as well as in Ceylon.

Almeida had now to encounter the sea-power of Egypt which was supreme in the Red Sea and that of Turkey which had access to the Persian Gulf

**The struggle with the Egyptian Sultan** and Basrah. An expedition sent out from Portugal in 1506 under Alfonso de Albuquerque, strengthened the Portu-

guese line of communications on the East African coast and took possession of Socotra which commanded the mouth of the Red Sea, and even tried to get the control of the mouth to the Persian Gulf. While Albuquerque was thus engaged, Almeida had to confront the powerful Egyptian fleet

**The great victory of Diu (1509)** which advanced in 1508 and drove away a small Portuguese squadron under the Viceroy's brave son, near Chaul on the

Bombay coast. In 1509 Almeida hurried north to take his vengeance on the combined fleets of the Egyptians, the Zamorin and the Sultan of Gujarat. After a long and stubborn fight at Diu, Almeida emerged victorious. This

Vijayanagar drew away the fire of Islam during this critical period. Jayne: *Vasco da Gama and his Successors*, p. 74.

battle "secured to Christendom the naval supremacy in Asia and turned the Indian Ocean for the next century into a Portuguese sea."\*

Albuquerque succeeded Almeida as the Portuguese Governor of the East (1509-15); and it was he that raised Portugal to the status of a great territorial power in India; he aimed at a great dominion in the east built up by both, colonisation and conquest. Long before

The Governor-ship of Albuquerque (1509-15)

the English, he came to grasp the idea, that with a strong navy it was quite possible for a small and distant country like Portugal to maintain a dominion in India. He was not content, like Almeida, with the command of the sea

His aims supplemented by a few fortified factories on the coast. For him Portuguese power should be incontestable both against the Muhammadans and against the Hindus and was to be based on their superior physical force and not on alliances with fickle Indian powers.† He wanted to fight with the combined forces of the Mussalmans and make the Indian Ocean a Portuguese lake. But his policy, though gigantic, was realisable under able direction. He desired to occupy Goa, Malacca, Aden and Ormuz. Goa would serve as a naval base and colony in India, Malacca controlled the passage into the Indian Archipelago. Aden and Ormuz commanded the entrance to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf respectively. He completely converted, by means of these conquests, the Indian Ocean from a Muslim into a Christian trading-sphere.

In the first place, he "tried to intercept the Moslem trade at its base in the Nile and the Euphrates valleys by occupying the mouths of the Persian Gulf and the Red

\* Hunter, Vol. I, p. 118. This victory decided that Portugal, and not Egypt, was to rule the Indian Ocean.

† "Such a policy required the maintenance of fortresses at certain strategic points which should be *places d'armes* to shelter the soldiers and to protect the ships while refitting. In addition, however, there must be arrangements for the terrible wastage of life and arrangements for the gigantic trade which Albuquerque's fertile mind foresaw. To meet the wastage he proposed colonies; and the trade would need factories, not necessarily at the fortresses, but where exigency required."—Whiteway: *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 170 et seq.

Sea." He captured and built a strong fortress at Ormuz in 1515, he blockaded Aden and even penetrated up to Jeddah, the port of Mecca, and incited the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia to attack Egypt from the south.

Conquest of  
Ormuz

In the next place, he completed the ousting of Mussalman trade from the Malabar ports. In 1510 he seized the site of Goa from the Mussalman state of Bijapur and two years later relieved it from the enemy. Goa was the chief Muhammadan port in Western India after Calicut. It stood in the centre of the coast, midway between the ports of Malabar and those of Gujarat and was situated and built upon an island separated from the mainland by two navigable rivers connected by a narrow creek which formed a good line of defence. It dominated the whole shore-line of Western India from the Gulf of Cambay to Cape Comorin; \* and its conquest "put the seal of Portuguese naval supremacy along the south-west Indian coast." It also involved territorial rule in India. It had to be defended firmly against the repeated attacks of the Muslims.

In the third place, Albuquerque worked towards the destruction of Moslem trade in the Far East, in Malacca and the Spice Archipelago. He seized the important port of Malacca in 1511, built a fortress there and made it the centre of Portuguese domination over the Malay Peninsula and portions of the Archipelago. Thus he succeeded in destroying the sluice-heads of the trade of Turkey and Egypt by blockading the mouths of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea; he dominated from Goa all the ports of the west of India; and from Malacca he controlled the source of the spice-trade of the Archipelago which was the most lucrative part of Moslem commerce in the East. All these he achieved by a series of brilliant victories and no less brilliant diplomatic feats. After conquering Malacca, he even opened up direct relations with Siam and sent ships to explore the Moluccas.

The seizure of  
Malacca (1511)

Extension of  
dominion under  
him

Albuquerque thus enlarged and fulfilled the scheme of Almeida. He gave the Portuguese power a territorial status in India and the control of all strategic points from Mozambique to Malacca which were to serve as fortresses and places of shelter to ships while refitting. Besides these, Albuquerque planted factories and induced the Portuguese settlers in these to marry Indian women and become regular colonists instead of being mere garrisons. He committed the Portuguese to a policy of territorial expansion in the East; and he was the first to realise that a fleet from Europe could not hope to maintain a permanent hold of Indian commerce and to control the trade routes of the Indian Ocean. He made the trade with Europe a royal monopoly; and the fortified factories were to furnish cargo for the royal ships. He allowed the local carrying trade to the Indians. He took advantage of the quarrels among the Indian princes and continued a friendly neutrality with Vijayanagar. He allowed the Indians to have their own institutions and strove to be just towards them, apart from the cruelties which he indulged in during warfare. And he richly merited the title of Great, being a brave soldier and an able administrator and utterly selfless in all his motives and actions. After thus building up Portuguese dominion, he desired peace and commerce and strove to be friendly with Vijayanagar and even with Bijapur and tried to do justice to all men and races under his sway.\* He thus widened and enlarged Almeida's exclusive sea-policy supported by a few forts at dominant points on the coast; and he based the Portuguese command of the sea upon "a line of shore supports whence he could draw both revenues and supplies."

Albuquerque's immediate successor tried to capture Aden, but failed. He sailed to Ceylon and constructed a fortress near Colombo. Nuno da Cunha, Viceroy from 1529 to 1538, conquered Mombasa on the African coast and developed Portuguese-

\* Albuquerque's *Commentaries* quoted by Morse Stephens, p. 144; and also F. C. Danvers; *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, pp. 328-331.

commerce in the Bay of Bengal by establishing settlements at San Thome near Madras and at Hugli in Bengal. He also erected in 1538 a fortress at Diu, in Kathiawar, from which the Portuguese could resist successfully any Indian opposition as well as Turkish attacks. Diu beat off a combined attack of Gujarav and Turkey forces which blockaded it by sea and besieged it by land (1538) and again an invasion of Gujarat ten years later. Joa de Castro, Viceroy (1545-48), and looked upon as the last of the great heroes, repulsed a Bijapurian attack on Goa; and his victory at Diu against Gujarat, noted above, is regarded as the last great achievement of Portuguese arms in Asia. The successors of Joa de Castro only systematised commerce, but did not make any great discoveries or plans of conquest or capture any of the other Muhammadan markets of Asia.

The Portuguese dominion extended in its palmist days west to east from the African coast near Mombasa and Mozambique to the Moluccas and north to south from the Cape of Good Hope to the head of the Persian Gulf and Diu. Its frontier and course ran in a zig-zag line from Natal to Mozambique and thence to Socotra and Ormuz, and thence on to Diu. Cape Comorin and Ceylon; and it finally projected from Ceylon south-east to Malacca, Java and the Spice Islands. It never took deep root in the Coromandel Coast and in Bengal, where the Portuguese remained to the end merely merchants and adventurers. In 1571 this dominion was divided into three independent commands, viz., a governorship at Mozambique controlling the African coast; a viceroyalty at Goa to control the Indian and Persian territories; and a governorship at Malacca to control the trade of the Archipelago. The Portuguese power never succeeded in getting command of the Red Sea where Aden remained its outside limit. Everywhere else they were dominant both politically and commercially.\* The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean

\* The account of the Portuguese Empire as it stood at the close of the 16th century given by a contemporary, Maria Y. Sousa, is given in Bk. I, Ch. IV of J. D. D'Orsay's *Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies, etc.*



outflanked the force of Christendom against the Turks and compelled a diversion of the Turkish fighting power from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.

### SECTION III. PORTUGUESE POLICY: THEIR DECLINE

Even Albuquerque did not want that the Portuguese should exercise direct control over the cities and islands which were the principal seats of their trade; their command of the sea was to depend upon the possession of strategic points along the coast whence they

The methods of Portuguese policy

might draw revenues and supplies. The main object of the Portuguese was to secure a monopoly of the Indo-European trade, partly by means of superior force and partly by treaties with native powers. They did not desire territories which were useless to them commercially and only secured from the kingdoms under their control, an acknowledgment of their own supremacy, a yearly tribute and sites for factories and fortresses. Of course, they insisted upon the exemption of their own ships and trade from the payment of duties, secured and guaranteed liberty to all Indian Christians and showed a bitter jealousy of all rivals at sea. Their fleet enabled them to choose a suitable point for attacking the enemy and a suitable time for doing so. There was no other efficient naval power in the Indian Ocean till the English and the Dutch came on the scene. Almost from the beginning, they employed Indian troops

Their employment of Indian troops

whom they disciplined on their own model and by whom they supplemented their own slender supply of soldiers and sailors. Indian troops thus formed a regular part of the Portuguese forces both in India and in distant sea-expeditions. The slave population rapidly increased in the Portuguese settlements by capture, purchase and traffic; and a large proportion of it was employed in military service. Soon the Portuguese soldiers and their half-caste descendants degenerated into a military mob selling themselves for service to all and sundry among Indian rulers. The Portuguese frequently interfered, however, in the internal affairs of the kingdoms under their

own control, took part in their dynastic intrigues and made everything a stepping-stone to their own aggrandisement.

The drain upon the resources of the Portuguese caused by the requirements of their Asiatic empire was much beyond their capacity and resources.

**Their trading methods**

Their trading methods often degenerated into piracy; and they derived profits

as much from plundering as from ordinary trade. They enjoyed the whole of the export trade to Europe, monopolised the port-to-port trade on the Malabar coast and also the trade from India to the Persian Gulf on one side and to Malacca on the other. All this trade was kept as a jealous monopoly of the Portuguese king; but the private trade of the officials and their frauds largely diminished its profits. The Portuguese treated their Indian subjects and opponents with great cruelty and even occasional barbarity. This provoked great discontent and ultimately

**Their attitude towards Indian states**

furnished their enemies, the English and the Dutch, with many willing helpers. The Portuguese were on hostile terms with most of the Indian states with which they came in contact; their intrigues created a suspicion and distrust of them; and also they were not straightforward and honest in their relations—being under the idea that they were always at war with all unbelievers Hindu, Mussalman and heretic.

The spirit of crusading enthusiasm and of hostility to the Muhammadans which, as we saw, had roused so largely the Portuguese to exploration and dominion, soon degenerated into an unreasoning fanaticism and developed a desire to convert all their Asiatic subjects to their own faith, even at the point of the sword. They thought it their principal duty to spread the Christian faith and a great portion of their energy was absorbed in this work.

**Their religious fanaticism and persecution**

A famous Papal Bull placed an obligation on the Portuguese to propagate the Catholic religion in all the new lands discovered by them; and priests of different orders accompanied the expeditions to India. In course of time their

number multiplied out of all proportion to the requirements of the Portuguese population and the Indian converts. They absorbed a large proportion of the revenues, much to the weakening of the factories and military establishments. Even before the time of Albuquerque, priests and monks had come in some number to India. After 1540 the Portuguese government came to be markedly dominated by priests—Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits—who displayed great bigotry and introduced the Inquisition into India. Bishoprics were created at Goa, Cochin and Malacca; Goa became the seat of an Archbishop; and dioceses were started even for China and Japan. The Inquisition at Goa was started in 1560 and busied itself with burning and

**The Portuguese Indian Church** punishing heretics like the ancient and peaceful Syrian Christians of Malabar and unbelievers. Their zeal for conversion doubled in force after the union of Portugal with Spain: and their bigotry under Spanish impetus became intolerable. A Synod held at Diamper (Udayampura) in 1599 tried to suppress completely the Syrian Christianity of Malabar. The chief results of this intolerant policy were a practical denial of justice to all non-Christians and the depopulation of Goa and other towns which were deserted by large bodies of Indian settlers flying from the conversion at the point of the sword. Many, however, embraced the faith under the goad of sticks and blows.

**Saint Francis Xavier** The Portuguese Indian Church was organised under the guidance of St. Francis Xavier, *the Apostle of the Indies*, who came to Goa with the Jesuits in 1542 and established an organised system of conversions. He condemned the mal-

practices common among the merchants and the officials and preached incessantly. St. Xavier converted the Paravas, the fishermen tribe who lived on the Coromandel Coast between Cape Comorin and Adam's Bridge, and the Mukkuyas of the Malabar Coast. Xavier also travelled to Malacca and Japan for this purpose; before his death in 1552 he had converted a large number of Indians. Though he lacked a real insight into the Hindu religion and though his converts belonged only to the lower classes, he was a great church-

man ; and he was a saint who was able to win the hearts of all whom he came in contact with and who displayed great piety and extraordinary mental keenness.\* He is said to have converted nearly 700,000 persons in ten years ; and his figure, as it appears in Jesuit accounts, is larger than human, more even than a great churchman and a saint.

The Portuguese were too small a nation to hold their Asiatic empire and commercial supremacy for long against Muhammadan opposition and European rivalry. With their slender resources in men, it was very difficult for the Portuguese to garrison and defend a long line of stations from the Cape of Good Hope to Malacca and to guard their monopoly of trade-routes in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The ravages of war, accidents of the sea, cholera and diseases very greatly thinned the small numbers of the Portuguese soldiers and mariners ; and even as early as 1525, it was found impossible to raise a fully-manned fleet and army from the ranks of pure Portuguese. It became necessary, even as Albuquerque found, to recruit for service in India men from the lower strata of the population and even from the ranks of criminals and half-grown lads. And the inter-marriage of the Portuguese settlers in the East with Africans and Indians permanently injured their national character and physique ; and it brought about the loss of both vigour and prestige.

Again, there was no continuity in the Portuguese government in India. The in-coming governor or viceroy usually made a clean sweep of the administration of his predecessor and filled all offices with his own nominees. Offices were frequently sold to the highest bidders ; and the tenure of most of them was only for three years, too short a period to enable them either to know the details of government or to get into close touch with the people. The higher officers grew rich by taking bribes and by indulging in illicit private trade. The soldiers were not regularly paid ; they were

\* "J. D. D'Orsay : *Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies and Missions in Asia and Africa*, Ch. VI of Bk. II.

left in arrears of pay; and many of them became professional thieves and pirates. Coinage was debased and the officials who were very ill-paid were largely recruited from the dependants and parasites of influential men at home. The number of offices was large; and the proportion of sinecures was very high. Besides the moral decadence of the Portuguese, we have to note their other fundamental defects like the lack of population and numerical strength to sustain the empire, the hopeless character of their administrative and fiscal systems and the bad treatment of natives. Almost all the later viceroys were not capable men and did not sustain the prestige of the earlier heroes. Portuguese pirates infested the Bay of Bengal and the narrow seas of the Archipelago; and they made the race-name of Christian Firingi, a word of terror.

Though the Portuguese controlled the commerce of the East, a substantial portion of the profits went to the European markets which distributed the commodities imported by her. Their eastern trade secured for the Portuguese only gold and silver which were concentrated in a few hands and squandered by their kings and nobles in wars and luxuries. Portugal was drained of her men and got in return only barren gold.

The Portuguese monopoly of the Indian Ocean remained unbroken till 1595, fifteen years after their fatal union with Spain. But even before this, their power had perceptibly begun to decline. After Louis de Athaide, Viceroy (1568-71 and 1578-81), who beat off from Goa a combined attack of the rulers of Bijapur, Calicut and Achin, the downward path came to be particularly marked. The forced union with Spain led to the neglect of Portuguese interests in the East and to the involving of Portugal in the costly and disastrous wars of Philip II with the Protestant powers of Holland and England. These later, stung to bitter resistance of the enemy, denied the Spanish-Portuguese claims to the monopoly of the ocean-routes and boldly began to prey on their commerce. Drake

The barrenness  
of their trade

Definite decline  
in their power  
from 1595

English and  
Dutch defiance of  
their monopoly

had circumnavigated the world in defiance of Spanish monopoly; the great Armada was defeated in 1588; and three years later, Captain Lancaster rounded the Cape of Good Hope and voyaged to Cape Comorin and the Malay Peninsula, in open defiance of the Portuguese. Owing to European complications, very few ships were sent to the East by Portugal in the period 1580-1612, resulting in a great diminution of Portuguese trade. In 1596 Spain became bankrupt, and Portugal had to suffer in consequence; when at last the Portuguese became an independent nation in 1640, their supremacy in the Asiatic seas had been completely destroyed.

Even in 1575-6, the Portuguese hold over the Moluccas became weakened. Ceylon rebelled from them a few years later. In 1595 the Dutch rounded the Cape of Good Hope and some years later defeated the Portuguese at Bantam in Sumatra and thus got hold over the Straits of Sunda (between Sumatra and Java) and over the route to the Moluccas and the Spice Islands. They soon made themselves complete masters of Java, expelled the Portuguese finally from the Island of Ceylon (1638-58), captured the great port of Malacca (1641) and converted the Straits of Malacca into a Dutch waterway. With their acquisition of the Cape of Good Hope (1651), the last vantage-point of the Portuguese in the ocean-route to India passed from their hands.

The English vigorously aided the Dutch in the work of destroying the Portuguese power. They defeated a Portuguese fleet off Cambay in 1611; and four years later, they won a memorable victory over the Portuguese off Swally in the Surat Roads. In 1616 they entered into direct commercial relations with the Zamorin of Calicut. They opened up trade with the Persian Gulf, captured Ormuz in 1622 from the Portuguese and completely destroyed the influence of the latter in that quarter. By a treaty of 1654, the Portuguese accepted the inevitable and agreed that the English should have the right to reside and trade in all their eastern possessions.

The Dutch  
conquests in the  
East at the  
expense of the  
Portuguese

English  
conquests

In the Bay of Bengal they fared equally badly. San Thome suffered many vicissitudes. Their settlement at Hugli was destroyed under the order of the Emperor Shah Jahan, in 1629. The Portuguese pirates of Chittagong, who had long been raiding the ports of Bengal and Arakan, were finally swept away by the Mughal viceroy of Bengal about 1665. About 1670 the great fortress of Diu was plundered by the Arabs of Muscat, while the growing power of the Marathas and the Mughals was a standing check on Portuguese activity on the Bombay coast.

Goa (which along with Diu and Daman forms the present Indian dominion of the Portuguese) is at present only a sorry relic of its past glory.\*

**Conclusion** The old Goa Dourade (Golden Goa) whose glories were sung by Camoens, the Portuguese poet, in his epic poem, the *Lusiads*, describing the brilliant achievements of his nation in Europe and Asia, is no more. Camoens spent some years in Goa and the East; and one of his friends was Garcia de Orta, a remarkable botanist and physician of fame. The subject of his poem is simply the first voyage to India preceded by a sketch of Portuguese history; in it is interwoven every heroic or dramatic incident; and the whole is a portrait-gallery of heroes centering round a transfigured Vasco da Gama. The poem forms a great epic of maritime daring.† The decline of Catholic Spain and Portugal before the two Protestant sea-powers of England and Holland show how the prize of Asia passes away from the hands of nations which are devitalised into the hands of those abounding with the flush of newly-won national independence and enthusiasm.

\* Described in Part II, Ch. V, of J.N. Da Fonseca's *An Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa* (1878).

† R. F. Burton: *Camoens: His Life and the Lusiads, A commentary* (2 Vols, 1881).

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE - THE MARATHAS AND THE SIKHS UP TO 1761 A.D.

#### SECTION I. FROM BAHADUR SHAH TO THE FALL OF THE SAYYIDS

A war of succession was inevitable after Aurangzib's death, largely due to the character and position of his sons and his own treatment of them. The eldest surviving son, successively called **Civil war of succession** Muazzam, Shah Alam and Bahadur Shah, had been badly treated on several occasions and even imprisoned, but had always acted with discretion. He had been restored to favour and was the governor of Kabul and Peshawar at the time of his father's death. The next surviving son, Azam Shah, taken into great favour for a time, counted upon easily supplanting his elder brother. Towards the close of his reign, Aurangzib showed a marked affection for Kam Baksh, the child of his old age, and gave him indirect hopes of ruling over at least a part of the Empire. It is doubtful whether Aurangzib really made a will, as is sometimes alleged, dividing the empire among his sons. Shah Alam pretended to be ready to acquiesce in any such arrangement; but the others would not hear of a peaceful settlement. The former however assumed the crown with the title of Bahadur Shah and prepared to face his brother's movements. He was greatly assisted by his son, Azim-ush Shan who had governed Bengal for a number of years and defeated and slew Prince Azam in a battle in the neighbourhood of Agra. Azam had alienated many of the older imperial officers by his arrogance; amongst others **Accession of Bahadur Shah** Asad Khan and his son, the powerful Zulfikar Khan, who had remained passive during the battle (1707), now came over to the victor and were promoted to the highest offices. Prince Kam Baksh revolted in the Deccan and refused to acknowledge Bahadur Shah who marched against him and defeated him in a battle near Hyderabad;



the prince died of his wounds soon after ; and Bahadur Shah's title was now unchallenged (1709).

The Emperor's presence in the Deccan led to a tacit recognition of Sahu, the son of Sambhaji, who had been released from captivity immediately after Aurangzib's death, at the suggestion of Zulfikar Khan, and with a view to create dissension among the Maratha ranks. The Mughal representative in the Deccan concluded a treaty with Sahu conferring on him the *sardeshmukhi* and the *chauth* of the six *subahs* of the Deccan, but stipulating that the collection should be made by Mughal officials without the interference of the Marathas. This arrangement kept the Deccan quiet till the end of the reign, though Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram (the second son of Sivaji), put up a claim to the Maratha throne on behalf of her young son, the Rajah of Kolhapur, and was supported by Munim Khan, the wazir, and a party of nobles.

Bahadur Shah, who is highly extolled by the historian, Khafi Khan, for his generosity and boundless good nature, attempted also to make a settlement of the disputes with the Rajputs, especially and with the powerful Jai Singh II of Jaipur and the implacable Ajit Singh of Jodhpur. The Maharana of Udaipur (Mewar) had all his territory restored to him and his independence recognised\* in everything but in name. Similar concessions were granted to the rule of Jodhpur, though more rigorous terms were imposed on Jaipur which had taken up the cause of Prince Azam. In spite of these concessions, Jai Singh and Ajit Singh combined together against Mughal authority; but before the Emperor could turn his attention to Rajputana, he had to face a formidable Sikh revolt in Sirhind ; and he agreed to all the Rajput demands and probably left the two princes on much the same footing as the ruler of Udaipur.

The Sikh revolt which broke out under Banda, the false Guru, who was religious ascetic of a warlike temper and had

\* Colonel J. Tod: *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Popular Edition), Vol. I, p. 317.

succeeded Guru Govind Singh in his chiefship, was very formidable one; its conduct was marked by great ruthlessness and wanton cruelty; and it spread quickly from Sirhind eastward to the Sutlej and the Jumna. In

**The Sikh revolt under Banda**

fact the Sikhs ravaged the whole country as far as Lahore on one side and Delhi on the other. They grew very formidable and rendered unsafe the north-western road from Delhi. The Emperor, stung to indignation, marched against them in person and drove them, after an effort, into the hills, after storming Banda's fort at Lohgarh, the Iron Fort (1710). Banda, however, escaped and continued to give trouble. After some time Bahadur Shah died at Lahore in the fifth year of his reign, leaving, as usual, the legacy of an inevitable civil war among his sons. Banda took advantage of the war of succession and recovered Lohgarh and his old power.

"Although not a great sovereign, Bahadur Shah may be called, at least in comparison with his successors, a fairly successful one. In his time the dignity of the Empire was fairly maintained."\*

**The character of Bahadur Shah**

He was over-generous to a fault and granted titles in large numbers, so much so that he himself gave rise to the saying—"Khans in every house and Rais in every bazaar!" He was mild, dignified and learned, and was much less bigoted than his father. His administration was, however, marked by some traces of Aurangzib's intolerance; and he would not raise Hindus to high office; but he was kind to his relatives and nobles and was not troubled by domestic revolts. He kept the Turan nobles in the back-ground.

In spite of his incapacity, Jahandar Shah, the eldest son of Bahadur Shah, succeeded in overcoming his powerful brother, Azim-ush-Shan, with the help of Zulfikar Khan and ascended the throne. He quickly overcame the rivalry of his other brothers; but his short reign of eleven months should be considered, according to Khaf

**The rule of Jahandar Shah (1712-13)**

\* W. Irvine: *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 137. He says that he left the officials to carry on their duties without intriguing against them himself or allowing others to do so; and he discouraged unauthorised interference in public affairs.

Khan, "an adverse possession" and deserving "to be reprobated and consigned to political oblivion." Jahandar Shah was frivolous, profligate and cowardly and was "an utterly degenerate representative of the house of Timour, Babar and Akbar." He gave himself up wholly to a favourite woman, and he promoted her low-born relatives to high places, much to the disgust of the old nobility and of experienced officers of the state. Zulfikar Khan, the wazir, imitated his master's example; and the whole court was given up to "midnight carousing and morning slumbering." No wonder that soon Farrukh Siyar, the son of Prince Azim-ush-Shan, raised the standard of revolt, with the assistance of the two remarkable Sayyid brothers, Hussain Ali, subhadar of Patna, and Abdulla, subhadar of Allahabad. The Sayyid brothers were Indian-born Mussalmans and their clansmen had the right of leading the imperial vanguard in battles. Many nobles, like Chin Kilich Khan, the future Nizam-ul-Mulk, deserted from Jahandar Shah, whose defeat thus became a foregone conclusion; and the Emperor fled ignominiously from the field of battle and was strangled in the Delhi fort by the bow-string, along with his chief supporter, Zulfikar Khan, and his aged father.

Farrukh Siyar's reign of about six years, was an agitated one, marked by frequent attempts on the part of the Emperor to assert his independence of the Sayyids, who vigorously controlled him, and by a series of violent crises which resulted in his ultimate deposition and murder.

The Sayyid brothers were descended of a brave clan of the Doab who had acquired a traditional right to lead the vanguard of the imperial troops. They had the prestige of their lineage and possessed personal renown for great valour. They were Shiah and were disliked by the dominant party of Sunnis at court and were strongly opposed to Aurangzib's reactionary and persecuting policy.\* Abdulla was raised to be

**The reign of  
Farrukh Siyar  
(1713-19)**

**The dominance  
of the Sayyid  
Brothers**

\* The Sayyids were of indigenous origin and prided themselves on being Hindustanis and their sympathies were "naturally with the natives rather than with the Mogul conquering class of foreign-

the wazir and Hussain Ali received the rank of Amirul Umara and chief bakshi. They controlled the entire machinery of government and indicated, by their tolerant and pro-Hindu policy which was hateful to the bulk of the old nobility, that their aim was the restoration of Akbar's

policy and rule. The state of the parties at court—the Turanis and the Iranis and even necessary. All the military adventurers flocking from the countries

beyond the Hindu Kush were known as Mughals,—either Iranis, coming from the south of the Oxus or Turanis coming from the north. The more numerous Turanis were

Sunnis; and the Iranis were Shiahis.

The Maghals and the Hindustanis The Turanis and the Iranis were constantly at rivalry with each other striving for dominance at court. This

rivalry became an important feature of the reigns of these emperors and contributed largely to the downfall of the empire. The immigrants coming from Kabul and Kandahar were called Afghans and Rohillas (or men of the hills). There were other foreigners like Arabs, Habshis (mostly African Negroes), Rumis (from the Turkish Empire) and Farangis (Europeans) who were serving in small numbers. All these formed the Mughal or foreign party; and in opposition to them were the Hindustanis, made up of Muhammadans born in India, Rajput and Jat chiefs and other powerful Hindu land-owners. These were supported by the numerous body of Hindu clerks and smaller officials. The

ers." They had a strong ground for "rallying what I may call nationalist sentiment to their side under the banner of toleration and political equality as established by Akbar."—Owen: *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, p. 138.

The same writer remarks: Whether from the first they sought to reduce the Emperor to a mere figure-head and monopolise power in his name, as Mahadaji Sindia did in later days, or whether again they contemplated.....

The aims of the Sayyids the actual subversion of the Imperial house, and the erection of a new monarchy on a non-Mogul and quasi-nationalist basis, seems to me by no means clear. But whatever their original designs, as the contest proceeded, they certainly formed associations which tended in the second, if not even the third, direction, though this may have been in the first instance involuntary and adopted simply in order to strengthen their hands" (p. 136).

latter had bitterly resented Aurangzib's persecuting and intolerant policy and longed to revive Akbar's rule. There was also a cross division into the Emperor's friends and the Sayyid's friends operating in the reign; and this was, for the time being, "the most decisive of all distinctions."

Farrukh Siyar had no resolution or discretion and was inexperienced in affairs of state. The Mughal or foreign

party became jealous of the ascendancy of the Sayyids; of them the most prominent

was Nizamu'l-Mulk, who was a distinguished soldier and provincial governor even in Aurangzib's reign and who was now appointed to the governorship of the Deccan *subahs* (1713). He and his father, Ghazi-u'd-din Khan, and his cousin, Muhammad Amin Khan, were the greatest of the Mughal nobles; but he did not take an active part in the mean intrigues of the court which was now dominated by a new royal favourite, Amir Jumla, who pitched his

influence with the Emperor against Sayyid Abdulla's ministerial responsibility. The Emperor was thoughtless and

fickle, was easily suspicious of his ministers and intrigued for their overthrow. On the other hand, the wazir raised a Hindu grain-dealer, Ratan Chand, to be his *diwan* and entrusted him with complete authority in all ministerial matters. The mutual suspicion and animosity between the Emperor and the Sayyids increased. The Sayyids raised additional troops and refused to go to court; and the Emperor got alarmed. A reconciliation was brought about; Amir Jumla was posted as governor of Bihar; and Sayyid Hussain Ali was empowered to proceed immediately to the Deccan, while his elder brother was to continue to be the wazir. Hussain Ali had under-

taken a successful campaign against Marwar and secured the submission of

Ajit Singh. The marriage of the daughter of Ajit Singh to the Emperor was celebrated with great pomp (1715). Hindus and other 'natives' were largely promoted and benefited. The *jazya* was formally abolished; and the Hinduisation of government proceeded apace.

Hussain Ali overcame the opposition that was incited by the Emperor against him and made a vigorous effort to establish imperial authority in the Deccan and re-settle the country. He, however, found the Marathas too strong for him and came to a discreet compromise with them. According to this, the Marathas were recognised in their possession of the rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the Deccan provinces; Raja Sahu was recognised in his claim to all the territories possessed by the great Sivaji and in the later Maratha conquests; and, in return, Sahu was to pay a tribute and to furnish a contingent of 15,000 horse to keep the country tranquil. Hussain Ali's object was to effect an alliance between his party and the Marathas; he was enabled by this treaty to withdraw his troops from the Deccan and also to get the assistance of a body of Marathas under the Peishwa Balaji Visvanath on his march to Delhi. When the Emperor refused to ratify this treaty and, under the influence of another low favourite, tried to win over Nizamu'l-Mulk who had been ousted from the Deccan *subhas* by Hussain Ali and other nobles to his side, the gulf between him and the Sayyids was greatly widened. The wazir vigorously collected soldiers of all tribes and extended his influence among the Indian as opposed to the Mughal party. The Emperor's vacillation led to his submission again; and another hollow reconciliation was patched up. The wazir whose fears had been thoroughly roused, recalled his brother from the Deccan. Raja Jai Singh who alone struck to Farrukh Siyar, urged him to take some decisive action, but to no avail. Hussain Ali demanded, on his arrival at Delhi, that Raja Jai Singh should be sent back to his own kingdom; he then marched into the city and took possession of it. The unfortunate Farrukh Siyar was dragged from his hiding-place in the harem and put to death (February, 1719).

Hussain Ali's  
compromise with  
the Marathas  
(1717)

Farrukh Siyar's  
final quarrel and  
death (1719)

The dominance of the Sayyids was now complete. Their forces and those of their confederates, Ajit Singh

and Raja Sahu, were supreme at the capital. Nizamu'l-Mulk and other nobles of the Mughal party had been alienated by Farrukh Siyar's despicable conduct and remained

**The Sayyids as king-makers**

passive; and there was no organised resistance to the Sayyids. Two phantom Emperors were placed on the throne, only to die in quick succession; and then came Mahammad Shah, a grandson of Bahadur Shah and a youth of eighteen years. The Sayyid clansmen formed a

**Accession of Muhammad Shah (1719)**

a close *prætorian* guard round the Emperor; and the civil administration was now wholly directed by the Diwan,

Ratan Chand. The magnificence of the court was greatly diminished; and the pride of the old Mughal nobility was insulted in many ways. Both Jai Singh and Ajit Singh were raised to high governorships. The Sayyid brothers were now all powerful; but the Turanian nobles were bitterly against them; and the great provinces were only nominally subject to the empire. Bengal was under Jafar Khan; Ajit Singh held the provinces of Gujarat and Ajmer. The Deccan *subhas* were under the control of Sayyid Hussain Ali; and Malwa was held by Nizamu'l-Mulk, the leader of the Turanian party and a bitter foe of the Sayyids. The *jaziya* was formally abolished once more; and in the words of Khafi Khan, "the Emperor had no power in the government of state.....everything was

**The Emperor a puppet in their hands**

directed by Ratan Singh and other vile infidels. The two Sayyids, the real rulers, thought themselves masters of the

pen and masters of the sword in Hindustan; and as opposed to their judgment and the sword of the Barhas, the Mughals of Iran and of Turan, were as nobodies."\*

The Mughal party now attempted a counter-revolution. Nizamu'l-Mulk, their natural leader, was "a strong Imperialist, a bigoted Mussalman, and an inveterate opponent of native predominance and of Maratha independence." He

**The Mughal counter-revolution**

was also clear-sighted and cautious and perceived the ultimate aim of the Sayyids to be the destruc-

tion of the Mughal monarchy itself, and of the race which it represented. In Malwa of which he was now the governor, he collected his partisans. He saw that the control of the Deccan alone would enable him to neutralise the alliance of Sayyids with the Marathas and marched against Hussain Ali's deputy there, defeated him and installed himself in power at Burhanpur and later at Aurangabad. The Sayyids were now seriously alarmed; and Hussain Ali prepared to march on the Deccan. But a party had been quickly forming against them with the connivance of the Emperor and his mother. The Mughal nobles, both of the Turanian and the Iranian factions, were weary of the Sayyid's domination. Their leaders formed a conspiracy to remove Hussain Ali. Hussain Ali was assassinated in a plot. His army was scattered, and Abdulla who attempted to gather a new army was defeated near Agra and taken prisoner. Muhammad Shah immediately proclaimed his emancipation from the hard tutelage of the king-makers.

End of the  
Sayyids (1720)

Thus ended the Mughal counter-revolution which had a great effect on the future fortunes of India. The Sayyids could have established a strong state on a national and tolerant basis "with the support of Indian Mussalmans and the Hindu Princes." They could and would have avoided that fatal lethargy and carelessness which threw the gates of India open to Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah. They could have kept up some show of imperial majesty and authority; and the Maratha danger and the coming trouble from the Europeans could have been minimised to a large extent.\*

Significance of  
the Sayyid  
revolution

The success of the Mughal party did not bring any restoration of strength to the empire. It, however, re-

\* "The encroaching and predatory character of the Maratha polity would undoubtedly have been a difficulty. But the compromise to cede the Deccan provinces to them might have been adopted.....(The Marathas) might have seen that their safest course was to keep on friendly terms with the rulers at Delhi, for fear of another counter-revolution in the Moghul interest, especially when the Europeans began to enter the list, and threatened to break up the whole political system of native India."—Owen, p. 178.



stored the Emperor to personal freedom ; and Muhammad

Effect on the  
empire

Shah could have followed the sagacious Nizamu'l-Mulk who now became the wazir and adopted a consistent and

vigorous policy. He was led by evil counsellors into vicious paths ; and the Nizam threw up his office in disgust and retired to the Deccan where he founded an almost

Retirement of  
the Nizam to  
the Deccan

independent kingdom (1724). He was too loyal a Mughal to think of overthrowing the line of Timur ; also he was conscious of the impossibility of "galva-

nising the torpid sovereign into political vitality ;" and he left "the ill-starred and crumbling empire to its inevitable fate." The Nizam had effectively overthrown the

His independent  
rule at Hydera-  
bad (1725)

opposition raised in his path by the jealous Emperor. His victory at Shakhher-khelda (1724) over Mubariz Khan marks the establishment in the Deccan

of his hereditary rule ; but he had been practically its independent master since the fall of the Sayyids. He made Hyderabad his capital in 1725 and received the title of Asaf Jah from the timid Emperor who was anxious to conciliate him.\*

## SECTION II

### THE MARATHA POWER UNDER THE EARLY PEISHWAS (1714—48)

Sahu, as we saw, had ascended the Maratha throne soon after the death of Aurangzib, though a rival party

Growth of  
Sahu's power

continued to give him trouble by putting up the claims of Tara Bai's son.

He selected Satara for his capital, as it had been the Maratha head-quarters since Rajaram's time ; he also won the aid of the followers of Saint Ramdas and strove to propitiate orthodox Hindu opinion which was alienated from him by his long residence at the Mughal court. He quickly gained over most of the nobles to his side. His cause was greatly strengthened by the skill of Balaji Visvanath, a Chitpavan Brahman, who was first a

\* Dr Yusuf Husain Khan (*Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, 1939) styles him the greatest statesman of the 18th century.

subordinate of Dhanaji Jadhav and subsequently entered royal service in Sambhaji's reign or soon after. It was he who persuaded his master to give to Sahu his valuable support and turned against Tara Bai "her own armoury of intrigue." He got over to his side Rajaram's younger widow and, through her, had Tara Bai and her imbecile son Sivaji flung into prison (1712). He conciliated the turbulent Kanhoji Angre, the powerful sailor-chief in command of the coast fortresses, and with his help invaded the possessions of the Abyssinian Sidis and got hold of a few places from them. Sahu appointed him Peishwa in November 1713; and this office quickly became hereditary in his family.

The rise of  
Balaji Visvanath  
Peishwa  
(1713-20)

The new Peishwa put down vigorously all the freebooters in the country. He also restored the *Ashtapradhan* or the old council of ministers, but concentrated all real power in his own hands. And his primary task was to bring the great Maratha chiefs in the more distant parts of the country effectively under the control of the king.

His work

In those days the Marathas came to be intimately associated with the Mughal politics. When Farrukh Siyar became the Emperor, he appointed Nizamu'l-Mulk to succeed Zulfikar Khan as the viceroy of the Deccan; and the latter persuaded Sahu to support the Emperor with a large body of horsemen in return for imperial recognition. Later, when Hussain Ali succeeded to the Deccan viceroyalty, he had to put down Daud Khan's opposition and got the support of Nemaji Scindia who had made himself master of the entire resources of Aurangabad. Finding that the Marathas under Khande Rao Dabhade were too

Hussain Ali and  
Mughal confir-  
mation of  
Maratha rights  
(1717)

strong for him in Gujarat over which they claimed to collect *chauth*, he came to a compromise with Balaji Visvanath. The Maratha claims to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in all the six Deccan provinces were recognised, as well as their sovereignty over all the conquests of Sivaji except Khandesh. In return, Balaji agreed to pay a tribute and to keep

15,000 horsemen at the disposal of Hussain Ali (1716). This agreement was rejected by the Emperor with indignation; and Hussain Ali marched to Delhi with the Deccan army and a contingent of 16,000 Maratha horse under the Peishwa and Khande Rao Dhabade. The subsequent murder of Farrukh Siyar and the triumph of the Sayyid brothers have been noted already; Balaji Visvanath and his Maratha contingent remained at Delhi, though disliked by the people, during the revolution and got the draft treaty confirmed, besides the addition of some smaller privileges.\* After this great feat, Balaji Visvanath returned to Satara (1719).

Nizamu'l-Mulk, who had openly turned against the Sayyids in support of Muhammad Shah, the new Emperor, now suddenly invaded the Deccan from his province of Malwa; he intended to use the Deccan resources in the coming struggle with the Sayyids. He was able to overthrow the lieutenants of the Sayyids in two battles at Khandva and at Balapur (1720); and it was his victories in the Deccan that really broke down the power of the Sayyids and brought about their fall. Muhammad Shah now confirmed him in the possession of Malwa and the Deccan and besides made him the wazir of the empire (1721-22). Finding his task at Delhi uncongenial and unprofitable, the Nizam resigned his wazirship and departed to the Deccan with the titles of Asaf Jah and *Vakil-i-Mutlaq*. From now, though he paid a nominal submission to the Emperor, he became in reality the independent ruler of the Deccan (1723-24).

While these events were happening in the Deccan, Balaji Visvanath died in 1720. His achievements were overshadowed by those of his greater son, Baji Rao I; "but the latter began where the former ended." Balaji has been deemed to be the second founder of the Maratha empire. He had conciliated and got the

\* The new Emperor Muhammad Shah had to issue three rescripts respectively for the *chauth*, the *sardeshmukhi*, and the *swarajya*.

support of Angre and secured a confirmation of all the rights of the Maratha state from Delhi. Above all, he introduced a new method of revenue-collection to which the Marathas owed, to a great extent, their increase of power and dominion. Balaji saw the weakness of Sahu's position and substituted for the autocracy of the monarch

his achievement "the confederacy of chiefs." He indeed perceived the defects of such a confederate organisation which contained within it seeds of decay; and he tried to create new bonds of union which would hold the nation together.\*

It was Balaji that created the complicated system of the collection of *chauth* which was based on an ideal assessment and so collected as to always afford ground for alleged deficiencies and demands of arrears. The system threw all power into the hands of his revenue-collectors and their agents who naturally played into the Peishwa's hands. To this method of collection, as much as to their military victories, did the Marathas owe the rapid extension of their empire. Lastly, it was Balaji and of Brahman ascendency Visvanath that thus gave a coherent unity to the Maratha nation "by creating a common interest in plunder and conquest among the various chiefs." He† had secured the legitimacy and recognition of the title of his master, Sahu; he had created strong bonds to hold the confederate Maratha chiefs together; and he had also established complete Brahman ascendency at Sahu's court. The genius of Balaji Visvanath, his influence and power, the character of Sahu and the great ability of Baji Rao combined, with other factors,

\* Thus, he intensified the strength of the traditions of Sivaji and of the reverence attaching to the person of Sahu which might act as centripetal forces, he kept up "a sense of balance of power among the different members of the Maratha confederacy by the judicious intervention of Sahu and by means of *sanads* and titles; he gave *inam* and *jaghir* lands in Maharashtra itself to the great chiefs and thus secured their fidelity to the central power, by their attachment to these possessions; he associated with the great chief officials of Sahu's government to act as their auditors and obliged them to present their final accounts to the state-treasury.

† See *Services of Balaji Visvanath* in Lecture 4 of G. S. Sardesai's *Main Currents of Maratha History* (1926), pp. 102-4.

gradually to pave the way for Brahman domination over the Maratha state and the usurpation of rule by the Peishwas.

Baji Rao, the second and the greatest of the Peishwas, was born in 1698 and had spent his childhood and youth in the camp and in the battle-field; he had "a wide knowledge of men and a spirit and courage equal to the most arduous tasks."\* His aim from the very first was to leave the narrow field of the Deccan, to push on his armies into the very heart of the Mughal empire and to unite all the forces of Maharashtra in a common effort at its uprooting. This scheme of aggressive conquest would give occupation to the turbulent Maratha chiefs and, at the same time, ensure the peace and extend the boundaries of the Maratha dominions. He had first to put down the rivalry of the *Pratinidhi*, Sripat Rao, who urged that Sahu should consolidate his internal power and reorganise the finances and strengthen his own kingdom; the Peishwa's scheme was rash and imprudent and would bring on the country another Mughal invasion, this time under the able Nizamu'l-Mulk. Baji Rao's reply was that the best way to replenish the finances was to plunder the Mughal provinces; and by his enthusiasm, eloquence and impassioned advocacy, he persuaded Sahu to come round to his view.†

\* "He united the enterprise, vigour and hardihood of a Maratha chief with the polished manners, the sagacity and address of a Konkani Brahman. He had both the head to plan and the hand to execute." Dr. Dighe (*Baji Rao I and Maratha Expansion* 1944) regards him as the greatest Maratha personality after Sivaji.

† "At the close of a lofty peroration, the minister fixed on Sahu his glowing gaze and said: "Strike, strike at the trunk, and the branches will fall of themselves; listen but to my counsel, and I shall plant the Maratha banner on the walls of Attock." Rhetoric succeeded where argument might have failed. Sahu, completely carried away, cried with blazing eyes: "By heaven! you shall plant it on the throne of the Almighty."—Kincaid and Parasnis: *A History of the Maratha People*, Vol. II, p. 184.

Sahu's reign supplied real *swaraj* to all people in Maharashtra and the real impetus to the imperialistic movement.—Sardesai, pp. 110-14.

"From this day onwards the faces of the Marathas were turned northwards; it is significant that the chief gateway of every Maratha fortress is the Delhi gate."—P. 391 of *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV (1937).

In 1724, after strengthening his position and putting down opposition at home, Baji Rao invaded Malwa and after overcoming its Mughal governor, left as Sahu's agents Udaji Powar, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Scindia, who were the respective founders of the states of Dhar, Indore, and Gwalior. Khande Rao and his lieutenant, Pilaji Gaekwar, levied regular tribute in Gujarat.

Baji Rao then boldly set about to thwart the schemes of the wily Nizam who had, meanwhile, permanently established himself in the Deccan and had begun to oppose the pretensions of Sahu and the Peishwa. The Nizam first supported the *Pratinidhi*, the rival of Baji Rao, in his pretensions to supremacy in the Maratha cabinet; then he affected ignorance of the respective rights of Sahu and of his rival cousin, Sambhaji, to the Maratha throne and even claimed the power to decide which of the two had the better right. But Baji Rao who was more than a match for the crafty Nizam, pounced on him suddenly and defeated him at Palkhad and finally compelled him to recognise Sahu as the sole king of the Marathas and to pay all arrears of *chaauth* and *sardeshmukhi* (1728, Treaty of Mungi Shivgaon). Sahu thus became the undisputed ruler in the Maratha *swarajya*; and Baji Rao triumphed over his rivals in Sahu's court. In the next year the Peishwa got from the distracted Mughal governor of Gujarat the right of collecting *chaauth* in that province also.

The Nizam tried a last stroke against the Peishwa; he now set up Trimbak Rao Dabhade, the *Senapati*, who had secured himself in Gujarat, to join him and march against Sahu and to support the rival claimant to the throne of Satara. But he was defeated in battle; and the only result was that the power of Dabhade passed on to his lieutenant, Pilaji Gaekwar—who founded the Baroda state—and his successors. After being frustrated in every one of his schemes, the Nizam at last offered to give Baji Rao a free

passage through his dominions into Malwa; he was anxious to consolidate his own power in the Deccan and had already given up hopes of maintaining the integrity of Delhi.

and final agreement with him (1729-31)

He should be free from Maratha danger and was prepared to allow the Peishwa to gratify his ambitions in the north. In 1731 Baji Rao and the Nizam came to a mutual understanding, the results of which were momentous. Malhar Rao Holkar invaded Malwa; he defeated the governor of the province; and the Peishwa, Baji Rao, quickly made himself master of Bundelkhand, driving away its Muhammadan governor (1731-33). The great Rajput nobles of the country came more and more openly to the Maratha side. The Emperor of Delhi

Maratha incursions in Hindustan

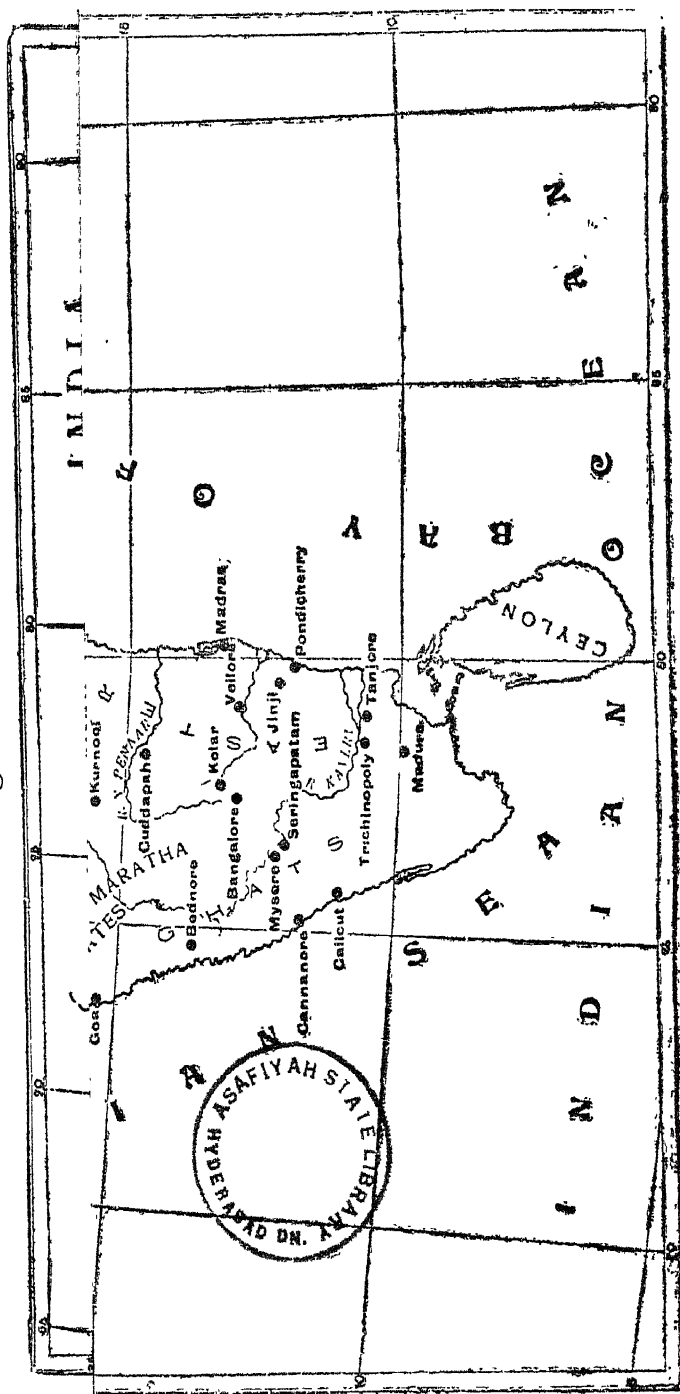
assembled large armies which, however, could not come to close grips with the nimble Marathas. They demanded very high terms which even the trembling

Muhammad Shah could not entertain. Then Baji Rao pushed on to the neighbourhood of Delhi itself, while the Holkar crossed the Jumna and made raids into the Doab. Sadat Ali, the surviving conspirator against the Sayyids, and now the Nawab Vizier of Oudh, repulsed the Holkar and drove him out of the Doab. He now joined the imperial general near Delhi; and while both were awaiting the enemy on the Ajmer road, Baji Rao, marching with

Baji Rao at Delhi (1737)

great rapidity, got in between the Mughal army and Delhi and began to plunder its environs. After having

demanded from the Emperor that the government of Malwa should be conferred on him, Baji Rao retired, for the time being, into the Deccan (1736). Now the Emperor summoned Nizam-ud-Daulah to his aid. The latter was seriously alarmed at the great extension of the Maratha power and the growing pretensions of the Peishwa. He marched north from Burhanpur, mustered an army, and crossed the Jumna into Bundelkhand. But his age and diminished resources were too weak for the impetuous Maratha cavalry. His march was obstructed and his convoys were cut off and at last, near Bhopal, he was blocked up by Baji Rao







with more than double his numbers and compelled to sign an ignominious convention. By this Baji Rao got the whole of Malwa and the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Chambal and the Narmada, besides a large booty; and this grant was to be confirmed by the Emperor (1738). The campaign resulted in the humiliation of both the Nizam and the Emperor and secured for Baji Rao "his crowning triumph." Thus the Maratha power was now established, *de jure* also, in Hindustan within easy striking distance from Agra and Delhi. The Mughal Empire was further ruined by the disastrous invasion of Nadir Shah; also Sadat Khan died and the Nizam was further disgraced in the campaign against the Persians. Baji Rao's power stood at its height. He was indeed foiled in an endeavour that he made to attack the Nizam's dominions when he was absent at Delhi; but he organised a great expedition into the Carnatic under Raghuji Bhonsle, the chief of Berar, and laid the distant Raja of Mysore under contribution. He also sent an armament to reduce the Portuguese at Bassein and the neighbourhood; and Chimnaji, the Peishwa's brother, took that strong fort and threatened Goa itself. The defence of Bassein was most heroic; and its fall warned the English in Bombay to prepare for a similar peril. In the midst of all these successes Baji Rao died at the early age of 42 (1740)—a truly great man judged by whatever standard of merit. "He was equally great as a soldier and a statesman. He understood to perfection the peculiar tactics of the Maratha horse and his campaigns against the Nizam were masterpieces of strategy. He was as chivalrous in the hour of victory as he was brave in the field. As a politician he had the lofty and far-reaching ambitions of his father; and he lived to see the tiny Maratha race spread all over India...from Delhi to Tanjore. He was an eloquent and inspiring orator...and a generous master to those that served him faithfully."\*

\* *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, (1937), p. 407.

The new Peishwa, Balaji Baji Rao, was less distinguished than his father in military capacity; but he gave dangerous scope to the national propensity for plunder and war. A party of nobles headed by Raghuji Bhonsle was against his appointment as Peishwa; but Sahu supported him and urged him to realise to the full his great father's ambition. Raghuji Bhonsle was at that time away on his expedition to the Carnatic; and after its successful termination, he waged almost annual campaigns against Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal. With the help of his famous general, Bhaskara Pandit, he made himself master of Cuttack and Orissa (1743-45) and directly attacked the capital, Murshidabad itself, on several occasions threatening even Calcutta. The Peishwa and Raghuji Bhonsle finally made a secret compact that they should not interfere with each other in their future activities; and in 1751, the latter got from Alivardi Khan the formal cession of Orissa and a tribute of twelve lakhs as the *chauth* of Bihar and Bengal.

Accession of  
Balaji Baji Rao  
(1740)

The waxing of  
the Confederacy

Raghunath Rao, the Peishwa's younger brother—afterwards to become so notorious—levied exactions in Rajputana and even on the Jats. Jayappa Scindia overran the land of the Rohillas and made war with Sadat Khan's successor in Oudh. Under Balaji, the Maratha confederacy waxed stronger than ever by the aggrandisement of its several members. He had established beyond doubt the hereditary character of his office and kept under control the dissensions and rivalries among his lieutenants. He was now to usurp the authority of the king himself.

Sahu was slowly dying. He had long been in ill-health and had left all state affairs in the hands of the Peishwa.

He was also indolent and very conservative. But he was not a mere puppet and exacted the homage due to his person on every occasion. He controlled military operations, directed the movements of the generals and enforced moderation even on the ambitious Peishwa. He, however, continued to

Sahu's rule

believe till his death that he was the vassal of the Mughal Emperor and cherished a profound reverence for the memory of Aurangzib in whose household he was brought up. In his last years he was troubled by the quarrels between his two wives and by the difficulty of adopting a suitable heir. Sahu was childless; his cousin, the rival Raja of Kolhapur, was also childless. Sukwar Bai, Sahu's wife, wished him to adopt a relative of hers; while the old Tara Bai, formidable as ever, produced a boy who, she declared, was her grandson and in whose

**Sahu's death  
(1748)**

name she wanted to rule as regent. Tara Bai was popular in the country; her past

services were great; and she had enlisted the sympathies of all who were opposed to the Peishwa's ascendancy. Balaji cleverly got out of the way both Sukwar Bai and Tara Bai's protegee and baffled all the latter's schemes. He published

**The revolution  
in the state**

a document, purporting to come from Sahu himself, which "empowered the Peishwa to manage the whole govern-

ment of the empire on condition of his perpetuating the Rajah's name and keeping up the dignity of the house of Sivaji, through the grandson of Tara Bai and his descendants."\* Sahu's will or rescript claimed to assure to Balaji permanence of tenure as Peishwa and declared that "our successors will not interfere with your post." This was solemnly repeated in another rescript. Tara Bai, foiled in her schemes of aggrandisement, disowned her grandson, and made one last effort to set up the Gaekwad against the Peishwa; and when that failed, she shut herself up in Satara where she retained the custody of her protegee till her death in 1761.†

Thus the Peishwa acquired a constitutional basis for his supremacy, which was greatly strengthened by the doubtful lineage, the feeble character and the imprisonment

**The Peishwa  
assumes  
sovereignty**

by Tara Bai of the new Raja who signed an agreement (the Sangola agreement) by which all the chief offices in the state

were to be handed over to the Peishwa's adherents. Poona,

\* M. E. Grant-Duff: *History of the Mahrattas* (4th ed.), Vol. I, p. 515.

† A clear account of the whole story is given in Kincaid and Parasnis: Vol. II, pp. 306-316.

the Peishwa's residence, henceforth became the military and political capital of Maharashtra instead of Satara; and the Maratha state now became an open confederacy of chiefs presided over by the Peishwa, whose position changed to that of a sovereign prince and who came to be obeyed and recognised as supreme on his own account far more than previously.

Sahu had appreciated the advantage of leaving to the Peishwa the actual control of the kingdom; and he chose to leave his successor under his tutelage. <sup>The change was inevitable</sup> The transition of power into the Peishwa's hands was "easy, natural and progressive." For the change in the government, the Maratha chiefs and Tara Bai were more to blame. The great disadvantage of the change was that "it aggravated the centrifugal tendencies of the Maratha state and especially the enmity between Brahman and Maratha which were at least kept in check while a member of the house of Bhonsle actually ruled; after the Peishwa's prestige was shaken by the defeat at Panipat, the disintegration became more and more evident." The Peishwas were, however, careful to pretend to act to the last only as the servants of their pageant rulers and had all their documents signed by them in their state-prison.

This revolution in the Maratha state was largely the handiwork of the Peishwa; but the blame certainly rests on the house of Sahu itself to a very <sup>The significance of the revolution</sup> great extent. "It was the quarrels of Tara Bai and Sahu that led to the rise of Balaji Visvanath. It was the sedition of Sambhaji (the cousin of Sahu) that created the ascendancy of Baji Rao. It was the bickerings (of the wives of Sahu), the monstrous ambition and inveterate malice of Tara Bai that led to the sovereignty of Balaji and the fall of the house of Sivaji..... But whosoever the fault the consequences were certain. With the imprisonment of Ram Raja, the epic of the Bhonsles ended. The Chitpavan epic had begun"; and it was to close in 1818.\*

\* Kincaid and Parasnis, Vol. II, p. 317.

## SECTION III. THE RISE OF THE SIKHS

The rise of the Sikhs\* who exercised a profound influence on the fall of the Mughal empire now demands some attention. Baba (or Guru) Nanak, the founder of the religion (1469—1539) was one of the gentlest and most

**The rise of the Sikh religion**

mystical of the mediaeval Indian teachers. From the time that he began his career as a religious teacher, he preached the worship of the "One Great and True Being" and condemned pilgrimages, rites and temple-worship and preached in their place "a pure worship by means of prayer and true love and good and virtuous acts." He gave a place in his system to ethics and morality, and he enjoined upon his followers excellence of conduct as the first of duties. His

**Guru Nanak (1469-1539)**

reforms, though in immediate effect they were only spiritual and moral, bore abundant fruit later on. "His care was rather to prevent his followers contracting into a sect and his comprehensive principles, narrowing into monastic distinctions."†

Nanak was the first Hindu reformer to emancipate the mind completely from the fetters of mythology and to teach in pathetic language that the

**His preachings** One God was "above Vishnu, above Brahma, superior to Shiva, and the creator of Rama and Krishna." He made a powerful attack upon Brahman priests and Mullas alike and was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression. He consorted freely with Muhammadans; and his saying,—“There is no Hindu and no Mussalman” attracted great attention: his system is distinguished from other reform movements, first by its non-sectarian character and secondly by its reconciliation with secular life. “It leavened the whole Hindu thought in the Punjab and improved the moral and spiritual tone of the whole people. Its second effort was to show to the Hindus that the highest worldly ambition was not incompatible with the purest and godliest life.”‡

\* See pp. 267-9 *supra*.

† J. D. Cunningham: *A History of the Sikhs* (1904 reprint), p. 69

‡ Gokul Chand Narang: *The Transformation of Sikhism* (1912) pp. 13 and 14; and Indubhusan Banerjee: *Evolution of the Khatsas*

Instead of nominating one of his sons, Nanak chose, as his successor, his disciple, Lehna, to whom he gave the name of Angad. The nomination of Angad was of great significance in the development of the Sikh community.

Gurus Angad,  
Amar Das and  
Ram Das

He followed loyally in the path chalked out by his master and saved the creed from being dominated by hereditary Gurus. This Guru, though an unlettered man, invented the *Gurumukhi* characters, the script in which all the Sikh sacred books are written; he also compiled his master's memoirs and popularised the faith by keeping a free *langar* or dining hall. Under him the Sikhs began gradually to drift away from orthodox Hindu society and form a sort of brotherhood by themselves. Amar Das, the third Guru (1552-74), had to overcome the opposition of a schismatic sect, the Udasis, who preached an entirely ascetic life. He divided the whole country inhabited by his followers into districts (*manjas*) and placed an influential Sikh over each to carry on the work of the faith and thus provided the community with convenient local centres. Ram Das, the fourth Guru (1574-81), systematised the voluntary offerings of his followers and got by a grant of the sympathetic Emperor Akbar, the town of Amritsar wherein he restored an old sacred tank which he renamed *Amritsagar* (Pool of Immortality) and in the midst of which he built a temple. Amritsar supplied the Sikhs with a rallying centre which was conveniently situated; and the favour of the Mughal Emperor increased the popularity of the faith among the Jats and other sections of the population.

Foundation of  
Amritsar (1574)

Guru Arjun Singh (1581-1606) completed the construction of the *Har Mandir* (Temple of God) in Amritsar which rapidly increased in prosperity and population. He compiled the *Adi Granth*—being a collection of the hymns composed by his predecessors and by himself and including some poems of other religious reformers like Kabir, Mira Bai and others. A copy of it was kept in the *Har Mandir* and

Vol. I, *The Foundation of the Sikh Panth*, (1936), Chh. IV and V. See also Dr. Gupta: *History of the Sikhs*, 3 Vols. and Dr. Sinha: *Rise of the Sikh Power*.

recited to the pilgrims and worshippers (1604). The Guru organised a regular system of taxation and held national assemblies of all his followers once a year. Thus he accustomed them to a regular system of government. He converted large numbers of men to the faith and was the first Guru to live a princely life. He was persecuted by the Emperor Jahangir for alleged complicity in the rebellion of Prince Khusrau and was tortured to death in prison. From this time forth a rooted hatred of the Mughal power took possession of the Sikhs; and to their religious zeal was now added political fanaticism of a bitter kind. After the Guru's martyrdom, a new period began in the growth of Sikhism; and there began to operate the transition to militarism by which the attitude of the community became openly hostile to the state which stood in determined opposition.

The effects of Arjun Singh's persecution were immediately felt. His successor, Har Govind, abandoned the gentle teaching of Nanak for a life of adventure. "He encouraged his followers to eat flesh as giving them strength and daring; he substituted zeal in the cause for saintliness of life as the price of salvation; and he developed the organised discipline which Arjun had initiated.... His policy was followed up by his two immediate successors and led up to the work of the great Guru Govind Singh."\*

Har Govind organised a regular military system, armed his followers and fully prepared them for fighting. He fought under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and finally turned rebel, fleeing to the hills about the upper Sutlej. The Guru's disciples were now soldiers; and numbers of sturdy Jat peasants joined his standard. His death was considered a national calamity.

The next two Gurus were not very prominent; and the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur (1664-75), was a remarkable

\* Sir D. Ibbetson's *Census Report of the Punjab* (1891).



man; he overcame rival factions within the faith, established a kind of royal court and went on an extended missionary tour to all parts of Hindustan, organising the local Sikh communities. His influence was the chief obstacle in the way of Aurangzib's proselytising zeal. He was arrested on a charge of treason and asked to embrace Islam; but he preferred death to apostasy and was beheaded by Aurangzib's orders; and his body was mutilated and disgraced. This was one more incentive to the military ardour of the Sikhs; and it prepared the way for the great Guru Govind Singh, who resolved to wreak vengeance on the Muhammadans and to evolve a religious and military commonwealth of his community.

**Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-75)** entirely transformed the sect in its outward forms and ceremonies. For twenty years down to 1695, the Guru rigorously set himself to the task of improving his community in the quiet seclusion of the Himalayan hills; and the bigotry of Aurangzib and his pre-occupation with the Deccan wars were additional stimuli to the realisation of the Guru's ends. "Abolition of caste, equality of privileges with one another and with the Guru, common worship, a common place of pilgrimage, common baptism for all classes, and lastly, common external appearance—these were the means, besides common leadership and community of aspiration, which Govind employed to bring about unity among his followers."\* Guru Govind trained the Sikhs to turn round against their persecutors and "to put to rout the pursuing pack of hounds." He impressed his men that they were born to conquer, that God was always present in the general body of the Khalsa and that wherever even five Sikhs were assembled, the spirit of the Guru would be with them. He felt that he himself was the leader required for the times, as he related in his own life-story of

**His reorganisation of the faith**

\* Narang: *The Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 82.

*Vichitra Natak*; and to rouse the spirit of his followers, he changed their name from Sikh into Singh, thus raising them to a position of equality with the Rajputs. He recruited his followers from all ranks of the people, accustomed them to the hardships of a military life, and made them familiar with guerilla warfare.\*

After thus creating a martial nationality, he achieved a commanding influence among the Rajas of the Punjab hill-states and established for himself His career a principality in the hills to serve as a base of operations against the Mughals. He defeated the imperial troops under Dilawar Khan, the governor of Kangra; and in 1701 he was shut up in his fortress of Anandpur and forced to escape with a handful of followers into Patiala. After some time he took service in the army of Bahadur Shah and even accompanied that monarch into the Deccan where he was stabbed to death by two Pathans. His dying injunctions to his followers were that they should be firm and resolute. He assured them that his spirit would be present wherever five Sikhs were assembled; and he said: "I founded the *Panth* as I was ordered by the Almighty. Let all Sikhs regard the *Granth* as the Guru. Look upon the *Granth* as the person of the living Guru. Those whose hearts are pure will find the Guru in his word." He left the care of the faith and the community to the collective wisdom of his followers and not to the devotion and strength of an individual disciple and successor.

Guru Govind succeeded in filling his followers with a longing for freedom and ascendancy. "He had broken the charm of sanctity attached to the Lord of Delhi (*Ishvaro wa Dillishvaro wa*—The Lord of Delhi is as His services to the Sikh cause great as God) and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by the Moslem rule. Govind had seen what was yet vital in the Hindu race; and he relumed it with Promethean fire."† He did not appoint

\* His followers were to be devotees of the sword and were to be exempt from every other kind of religious rites and ceremonies, to be *Krita-nasha*, *Kul-nasha*, *Dharma-nasha*, and *Karma-nasha*: and their devotion to the sword was an act of the highest merit, bringing prosperity now and beatitude hereafter.

any successor to the Guruship, lest it should be defiled by unworthy occupants and enjoined upon the Sikhs to look upon the *Granth* as their only Guru in the future. He taught them democratic principles which were at the root of their later military and political organisation and made all his followers regard each other as *bhai* (brother) and act by the decisions of the *Gurumata* (national assembly).

Bairagi Banda who claimed to be commissioned by the Guru to act as the temporal leader of the Sikhs after him, gathered together an army of devoted Sikhs besides mercenaries and irregulars, took up arms against the Governor of Sirhind, defeated him and plundered the city. Emboldened by his victory, he announced himself to be the champion of Hinduism and carried havoc even into the province of Delhi. As we have read, the Emperor crushed the rebellion ruthlessly, but only with great difficulty. All attempts to capture Banda, who escaped, proved fruitless however. The Sikhs were hunted down vigorously; and in 1714 Banda again descended from the hills and fell upon the country round Batala and Kalanaur. A formidable force was sent against him; he was defeated and driven into the fortress of Gurdaspur where he submitted only after a protracted siege. He was killed after horrible torments. Banda had strenuously worked for the liberation and independence of his people and was an embodiment of sacrifice and selflessness.\* He thus gave the Sikhs a new prestige and power and furthered Govind's task in completely breaking the charm of Mughal invincibility; and he made the Hindus realise that they could still fight and conquer. Though he failed, he carried one step further the realisation of the independence and supremacy of the Khalsa.

The fortunes of the Sikh community from the fall of Banda in 1716 to their permanent occupation of Lahore in

\* "He always lived up to his principles: 'Wishing the advancement of the Panth, walking in the path of *Dharma*, fearing sin, living up to truth.'" P. 251 of Ganda Singh's *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* (1935).

1763 were very chequered. For some years they suffered from the reaction and persecution of Farrukh Siyar which continued even after his death. Abdus Samad, Khan Dauran, governor of the Punjab, pursued a policy of relentless persecution till his death in 1737; and his son and successor, Zakriya Khan, followed a policy of firmness tempered by kindness. But by 1725 small bands of Khalsa warriors had begun to reappear and indulge in plundering expeditions and guerilla warfare. By 1731 they had extended their depredations to Lahore, and had strengthened their position round Amritsar. They plundered the baggage-trains of Nadir Shah and took advantage of the confusion which reigned at Delhi and Lahore. They fast consolidated their power between the invasion of Nadir Shah and the first Indian expedition of Ahmad Shah. By 1750 they had made themselves masters of a large portion of the Bari and the Jalandhar Doabs. Their later fortunes were entwined with the declining power of the Mughal empire.

#### SECTION IV. THE DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE TO THE BATTLE OF PANIPAT

The departure of Nizamu'l-Mulk for the Deccan, after he was convinced of the imbecility of Muhammad Shah and the impossibility of building up a vigorous administration, was not followed by any event of importance at Delhi except that the Jats were alienated from the Rajputs by the action of Jai Singh II and the provinces of Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand came to be quickly occupied by the Marathas who subsequently acquired their *de jure* claims to these territories. Nizamu'l-Mulk had attempted very hard to free his dominions from the influence and presence of the Marathas: he had also endeavoured to arrive at an understanding with them for payment of *charuth* and *sardeshmukhi* and to support the rival of Sahu to the throne. Finally he was compelled to accept all the conditions imposed by Bajji Rao and in 1731 to suggest the diversion of Maratha

Sikh fortunes  
after Banda  
(1716-38)

The empire after  
1723-24

Steady Maratha  
encroachment

advance into Malwa. Maratha marauding bands to the number of 100,000 were ravaging Malwa in 1731; and so they overran the whole of the province. By 1734 they had penetrated to within striking distance of Agra. Baji Rao's control over Malwa was tacitly recognised by the Emperor. The impotence of the Rohillas and even of the Nawa Vazier of Oudh to resist the encroachments of Baji Rao even beyond the Jumna and the actual march of the Peishwa to Delhi in 1736 have already been noted, as well as Nizam-ul-Mulk's ignominious surrender at Bhopal, which placed the Marathas within easy and striking distance of the Mughal capital itself. It has been remarked that the submission of the Nizam was disgraceful and the cession to the Marathas included nothing that was the Nizam's and his aim was probably the formation of an independent Maratha state between the Chambal and the Narmada as a buffer between his own dominions and those of the Emperor.

The invasion of Nadir Shah was largely the result of "the corruption, short-sightedness and obstinate disregard of significant and successive warnings and of the most obvious precautions on the part of the Emperor and his ministers. Nadir Shah was a Persian adventurer of low origin, who had, by a revolution, usurped the throne of Persia after driving out its Turkish and Russian invaders. He quickly overcame the opposition of the Western Afghans, occupied Herat and Qandahar, conquered the Mughal province of Kabul and captured Attock. The Mughals had neglected to subsidise the frontier tribes and keep the frontier roads open and secure; and the frontier posts and garrisons were woefully neglected. The power of Nadir Shah was underrated and his protests were unheeded; and even his emissary was killed. Naturally irritated, Nadir advanced to Peshawar, occupied it, crossed the Indus and received the easy submission of the governor of Lahore. He then rapidly advanced on Delhi (January 1739).

Rise of Nadir  
Shah

The Emperor and the Khan-Dauran marched at the head of a considerable army which was, however, disheartened in spite of the presence of His invasion of India Nizamu'l-Mulk and Sadat Khan in the camp. The Rajputs would not join the imperial standard. In the battle that followed at Karnal on the highway from Delhi to Lahore, twenty miles north of Panipat, (13th February, 1739), the Indian army was thoroughly routed, its defeat being as much due to its being over-reached in weapons of war and methods of fighting as to its bad generalship. The Indian soldiers were very deficient in the use of firearms; and the superior mobility of the Persians gave them an advantage from the very beginning. "The Indians' crowning folly was the employment of elephants in this modern age of muskets and comparatively long-range artillery carried on camels."\*

Khan-Dauran was mortally wounded and Sadat Khan of Oudh taken prisoner. The latter, jealous of the Nizam and of his favour with the Emperor, was suspected of having incited Nadir Shah to march on Delhi and plunder it. The story of Muhammad Shah being conducted to his own capital, of Nadir Shah rifling the imperial palace of all its splendid treasures, including the Peacock Throne, and of the more tragic plunder and massacre of the people, needs no recounting here. This was a *coup de grace* to the declining majesty of the Mughal empire; and so long as Nadir Shah was at Delhi, Muhammad Shah was a mere prisoner of state. A threatened march of Nadir Shah to Ajmer on a pretence of pilgrimage caused a consternation in the minds both of Jai Singh and Baji Rao.

Nadir Shah annexed the trans-Indus provinces of the empire and planted a strong foreign power on its western frontier, which descended to Ahmad Shah Abdali and his dynasty. The Punjab was soon afterwards lost to Muhammad Shah. "Throughout the second half of the 18th century, Ahmad Shah Abdali and his

descendants who ruled over Kabul and Lahore constantly threatened the peace of Delhi and even the eastern provinces."\* Gangs of robbers closed the western roads to peaceful traffic; and desolation reigned over the whole Lahore province. The invasion had no effect on the intrigues and corruption of the Delhi court. Nizam-ul-Mulk whom Nadir suspected of great craft, returned to the Deccan. Oudh was formally conferred on Sadat Khan's nephew, Safdar Jang. Multan and the Punjab were given over to Zakriya Khan, the son of Khan-Dauran; while in

**Growing confusion in the provinces**

Bengal there was a domestic revolution in 1740, as a result of which, Alivardi Khan, the deputy of Bihar, overthrew the Nawab and usurped power for himself, as viceroy of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In the Deccan, Nasir Jang, the second son of the Nizam, who had been left by his father as deputy, rose in rebellion and would not submit for some time. A large Maratha force under Bhaskara Pandit, the minister of Raghuji Bhonsle of Berar, invaded Bengal in 1742 and occupied some districts. Though they were driven out after some difficulty, Raghuji Bhonsle repeated the invasion in 1743. Thus the provinces fell into confusion along with the centre of the empire. The Sikhs began to reassert themselves and from the death of Muhammad Shah became an ever-present thorn on the side of Delhi. Peace and industry ceased to exist in the Delhi province itself; and the Marathas, now absolutely secure in the southern and western provinces, began to penetrate repeatedly into Orissa and south-eastern Bihar and Bengal from 1742 onwards, almost annually. For the remainder of his life Muhammad Shah grew weaker and weaker; and the rulers of Oudh and the Deccan declared their practical independence as the Nawab of Bengal had already done.

The Hindu reaction which was stimulated by Nadir Shah's prostration of the empire did not result in any good prospect to the political and civil government of the country. It was marked by Sikh fanaticism, Jat lawlessness and Maratha predatory

\* Irvine, Vol. II, p. 377, where he compares this invasion with that of Timur, much to the advantage of the latter.

conquests. Churaman, the chief of the Jats, had taken sides with the Sayyids and had given trouble to the Emperor Muhammad Shah and to Raja Jai Singh who attempted to subdue him. His successors, **The Jats and the Rohillas** Badan Singh and Suraj Mal, established their dominion over the whole of the Agra and Muttra districts and started the present ruling house of Bharatpur. The Rohillas, an Afghan tribe, contrived to build up an independent power in the country round Moradabad (in the United Provinces) under their chief, Ali Muhammad. In 1743 the Emperor had to grant formally the concession of Malwa to the Marathas who had extorted it from the Nizam some years previously; and shortly afterwards he had to grant them *chauth* in the remaining provinces of the empire also.

In Bengal where Alivardi Khan who had superseded the authority of the viceroy, Serferaz Khan had been confirmed in his usurped place, the **Further Maratha inroads in Bengal** Marathas under Raghuji Bhonsle appeared and repeated their raids. On one occasion the Emperor summoned Balaji Baji Rao himself, the new Peishwa, to co-operate with Alivardi Khan in resisting the Bhonsle. The latter was forced to evacuate Bihar; and it was in consideration for this service of the Peishwa that he was formally granted the viceroyalty of Malwa (1743). Next year the Bhonsle's general, Bhaskara Pandit, re-appeared in Bengal; but his army was routed and he himself was treacherously murdered. Alivardi Khan was not hampered in his operations by the court of Delhi—as were Nizamu'l-Mulk and Hussain Ali—though he feared the designs of Safdar Jang, the nephew of Sadat Khan and the new ruler of Oudh. He maintained a strict discipline over his turbulent Afghan soldiery, but was weakened greatly by internal disturbances and the rebellions of his commanders. In 1745 he suffered several defeats at the hands of Raghuji who attacked, Murshidabad itself. Other Maratha expeditions followed, they being joined by the rebel commanders on occasions. It was only by the cession of the Cuttack territory and the payment of an annual sum in lieu of *chauth* in 1751 that Alivardi Khan



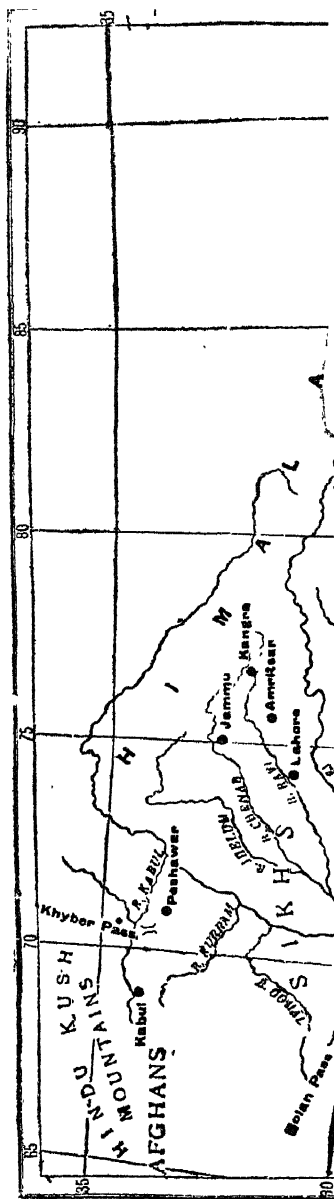
could free himself from the Maratha incursions. And thus did the Nawab of Bengal become a tributary of the Berar ruler as Nizamu'l-Mulk had become one of the Peishwa. Everywhere the Marathas were predominant until their supremacy in North India at any rate was shattered by the issue of the terrible battle of Panipat.

Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747; and an Abdali Afghan sprung from the sacred Saduzzai branch of his tribe, Ahmad Shah,\* had fought his way to the headship of the Afghan race and the mastery of Sind; and he now prepared, in the wake of Nadir Shah, his master, to lead a small but resolute army across the Punjab. On this occasion he was repulsed by his namesake, Prince Ahmad (March 1748) who thus saved Delhi for a few years from further suffering. The victorious Prince Ahmad returned to Delhi only to find his father, Muhammad Shah dead, and succeeded him as Emperor Ahmad Shah, with Safdar Jang of Oudh for his Wazir.

"Muhammad Shah demands our pity, if he may not command our respect." He could not have saved the empire and prevented its disruption; and he knew "both the hopelessness of the situation and his own powerlessness to amend it." The army was greatly demoralised and consisted chiefly of contingents maintained by the great nobles; the commanders were jealous of one another and the soldiers had no discipline and training. The aged Nizamu'l-Mulk, who, after his return to the Deccan from Delhi in 1742, had suppressed the revolt of his son, Nasir Jang, and restored order in the affairs of the Carnatic *subah* which had been disorganised by Maratha incursions and growing local anarchy, had died a few weeks before Muhammad Shah; and his sons and descendants could pay, owing to their own quarrels, but little heed to the affairs of Northern India.

\* Dr. Hari Ram Gupta (*Studies in the Later Mughal History of the Punjab*, 1946) gives a good picture of Ahmed Shah and his invasions.

# Pages 364 & 365





The new Emperor's reign was short and disastrous. There was a serious rising of the Rohillas which was suppressed by Safdar Jang of Oudh only with the help of the Jats and the Marathas. This placed new weapons of raid and plunder in the hands of the Scindia and the Holkar who were now free to ravage Rohilkhand ; while the imperial forces were defeated in Marwar and the Punjab was conquered by Ahmad Shah, the Abdali, who now styled himself the Durrani, king of Afghanistan and invaded India for the second time in 1749. In Delhi itself a street war bitterly raged between Safdar Jang and his rival Ghaziu'd-din, a grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk and the son of the late wazir.

Emperor  
Ahmad Shah  
(1748-54)

Ghaziu'd-din  
and Safdar Jang

"For six months the battle-cries of Persian and Mughal, Shiah and Sunni, resounded through the city. The Holkar and his Marathas fought for the Mughal leader, against their Hindu countrymen, the Jats, whose Raja, Suraj Mal, had espoused the cause of Safdar Jang."

(Alamgir II  
1754-9)

The latter was at last forced to retire into his own province of Oudh ; and the triumphant Ghaziu'd-din, soon afterwards put out the eyes of the Emperor and set up on the throne another member of the imperial family under the title of Alamgir II (1754).

Safdar Jang died soon afterwards and was succeeded in his governorship by Shujau'd-Daula who was to play a prominent part in Anglo-Indian history ; and in the meantime, Ghaziu'd-din had recovered the Punjab from its Afghan governor. Ahmad Shah Abdali advanced once more into India, this time upon Delhi itself which was plundered and pillaged. Ghaziu'd-din submitted to the invader and was pardoned. The Afghan invader levied contributions on the Nawab of Oudh and on the Jats before he retired ; he appointed Najibu'd-Daula, a Rohilla chief of great ability and character, as commander-in-chief at Delhi as a counterpoise to Ghaziu'd-din (1757). Raghuji Bhonsle frequently raided Bengal ; and in 1751, Orissa was permanently ceded to the Marathas by Alivardi Khan, in lieu of

Ahmad Shah  
Abdali at Delhi  
(1756)

their claim to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* over the three provinces.

Ghaziu'd-din quickly resumed his mischievous activity, drove out Najibu'd-Daula and recovered possession of Delhi and of the Emperor's person with the help of the Marathas who were now commanded by Raghunath Rao, the Peishwa's brother. He also incited a revolt against Timur Shah, the son of the Abdali, who was left in charge of the Punjab. Raghunath Rao was invited to co-operate; he crossed the Sutlej, drove the Afghans out of the Punjab and set up a governor of his own choice at Lahore. One of his generals overran Rohilkhand and quarrelled with Shuja'u'd-Daula of Oudh. Above all, Sadasiva Rao—the Bhao as he was commonly called—who was a cousin of the Peishwa, had started a great career of victory in the Deccan “which began with the taking of Ahmadnagar and ended in 1760 with the conquest of half the country ruled by the Nizam.” In the strife for power between the successors and claimants of Nizamu'l-Mulk's throne, the Marathas not only baffled Salabat Jang (who came to the throne in 1751) and his French ally, M. Bussy, but also obtained the cession of western Berar. In co-operation with the English, the Marathas captured the strong Angria pirate stronghold of Savandrug (1755) and subsequently acquired the fort of Gheriah. The last vestiges of Muhammadan rule in Gujarat were cleared away by Raghunath Rao in 1755; and he, with Damaji Gaekwar, enforced the claim to *chauth* on the Hindu states of Rajputana and Bharatpur. Ali Gauhar, the heir-apparent of the Emperor, had first raised troops for service against Ghaziu'd-din. He subsequently chose Bihar as the field of his ambition and attacked Patna in 1758 when the English had established their hold over Bengal and Bihar after their victory at Plassey.

The Maratha power thus reached its highest point in 1757, the year of the victory of Plassey. Over all the land from Mysore to Lahore, Balaji Rao levied blackmail or ruled the country through his confederate chiefs. Balaji Rao had organised, before

Raghunath Rao's triumphs (1757)

The apogee of Maratha power

Maratha triumphs

this, a grand *mulkgiri* expedition to collect arrears of tribute from the Carnatic and Mysore.

Their decisive  
issue with  
Ahmad Shah  
Abdali

He took the great fortress of Ahmadnagar from the Nizam in 1758, and won a momentous victory over him at Udgir (1760) where the Maratha general, Sadasiva Rao gained great reputation. The strength of the Nizam was greatly crippled by the loss of territories and revenue that he had to give over to the Marathas. The Maratha army had been greatly strengthened by a powerful park of artillery led by Ibrahim Gardi, an adventurer who had been trained by Bussy, the famous French soldier at the Nizam's court. Balaji effectively improved the system of Maratha administration; but outside their own territory, the Marathas were purely predatory in all their activities and destroyed the industry and wealth of the districts they conquered.

But the shadow of a great calamity was impending in Maratha path. Sadasiva Rao, the Bhao, supplanted Raghunath Rao as the Maratha commander-in-chief in Hindustan. Raghunath Rao had unwisely occupied Lahore and thus provoked the Abdali. Ahmad Shah, the Abdali, once more invaded India, to avenge himself on the Hindus and on behalf of the Rohillas (1759). Ghaziu'd-din fled to the Jat Raja Suraj Mal; and the Afghan came down driving the Holkar and Dattaji Scindia before him, the former being defeated and the latter actually killed. The murder of Alamgir by order of the brutal Ghaziu'd-din, left Delhi without an Emperor, and the capital was occupied by an Afghan garrison (November, 1759).

The Bhao now appeared on the scene; he gathered together a mighty host of Rajputs, Jats and Marathas, retook Delhi and once more despoiled the ill-fated city. He was resolved to drive the Afghan king beyond the Indus and hastened to proclaim Viswas Rao, the son of the Peishwa, who was with him as the nominal commander, as the *Chakravarthi* of all India.

Casi Raj Pandit, who was an eye-witness at the battle of Panipat and who was in the service of the Nawab of Oudh, gives in his narrative a favourable estimate of the Bhao's ability as a civil administrator; but he depicts him

as haughty and arrogant and as foolishly neglecting the advice of the Holkar and Suraj Mal who were experienced in the affairs of Hindustan and who were in favour of continuing the guerilla warfare practised on the traditional lines of Sivaji. The Afghan artillery was inferior to that of the Marathas; but Ahmad Shah was too cautious to be drawn into a pitched battle except on his own terms. On the other hand, the Afghan ruler who played a wary and cautious game, got the wavering Shuja'ud-Daula over to his side, as well as the cordial assistance of Najib and the Rohillas. He at last crossed the swollen Jumna above Delhi; and the Marathas impressed by this march, entrenched themselves in the fateful field of Panipat, with earthworks and a ditch which were further protected by a heavy park of artillery. For two months the two armies faced each other, neither daring to move bodily out of its entrenchments. At last the Bhao, foiled in his efforts to pin the Abdali to his ground, and not getting the help of the grand army of the Deccan as expected, was forced by starvation and the enemy's skirmishes to start the decisive struggle. He faced the battle single-handed, and even then fought bravely to the last.\* The struggle was finally decided when the young Viswas Rao died, and the Holkar and the Gaekwar led their troops from the field as if everything was lost.

\* The Bhao knew the plains of Hindustan to be unsuited for guerilla warfare; and moreover the Afghans, with their tireless Turki steeds, could easily outride and outmanoeuvre the Marathas. And according to Mr. H. G. Rawlinson, he was justified in not dissipating his resources in guerilla warfare and in forcing his opponents to accept battle in the open field. He shut himself up in Panipat secure in his entrenchments; while the enemy's attack on it might be easily frustrated by the efficient artillery of Ibrahim Gardi serving under him. It was the Peishwa that did not come to his help in time, idling away in the Deccan. Moreover, the Shah fell upon him at the psychological moment when his army was exhausted; and again he kept in hand a reserve of 10,000 heavy cavalry which decided the final issue of the battle. The Peishwa gave proof of his guilty conscience and tried to shift the responsibility for the disaster on to other shoulders. (*An Account of the Battle of Panipat etc.*—tr. from the Persian of Casi Raja Pundit by Lt.-Col. J. Brown; and edited by H. G. Rawlinson) (1926), pp. x-xi of the Introduction.

For an account of the battle, see Owen: *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 256, *et seq.* and Rawlinson: pp. 17-41; and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV (1937)—pp. 420-6.

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## CHAPTERS III—VII

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